

S E V E N
S E R M O N S,
V I Z.

- I. Of the Unpardonable SIN against the HOLY GHOST: Or, The Sin unto Death.
- II. The Saints Duty and Exercise: In Two Parts. Being an Exhortation to, and Direction for Prayer.
- III. The Accepted Time, and Day of Salvation.
- IV. The End of Time, and Beginning of Eternity.
- V. *Joshua's* Resolution to serve the Lord.
- VI. The Way to Heaven made Plain.
- VII. The Future State of Man: Or, A Treatise of the Resurrection.

By ROBERT RUSSEL.

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T H E
Preface to the Reader.

TH E Reason of Publishing this following Treatise, is, because some People have desired satisfaction from me, what the Sin against the Holy Ghost is: But I could not make a full Description of it in short; therefore it came in my mind to enlarge upon it in a small Book, wherein they may receive full Satisfaction about it. And this I have done not from the opinions of others, but from the true and written Word of GOD, This Sin can be committed but by few, and yet sometimes it steals into the Hearts of them that commit it, when they discern it not. But the Lord of his Mercy keep us all, both from that Sin, and also from the Reign und Dominion of every Sin; which that he may do, is the Prayer of,

Your Friend,

R. RUSSEL.



A TABLE of several Texts discoursed upon.

THERE is a Sin unto Death, 1 John v. part of verse 16.

Pray without ceasing, 1 Thes. v. 17.

-----Behold! now is the accepted Time: Behold! now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor. vi. part of verse 2.

And the Angel which I saw standing upon the Sea, and upon the Earth, lift up his Hand to Heaven: And swear by him that liveth, for ever and ever, &c. that there should be Time no longer. Rev. x. Verse 5. and part of Verse 6.

But as for me and my House, we will serve the Lord, Josh. 24. part of verse 15.

Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal Life? Matth. xix. 16.

Marvel not at this: The Hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, they that have done Good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the Resurrection of Damnation, John v. 28, 29.

Of

Of the Unpardonable SIN
Against the
HOLY GHOST.

O R,

The SIN unto DEATH.

I *John* v. part of verse 16. *There is a Sin unto Death.*

THIS sin which St. *John* calls here, *The sin unto death*, is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, described by our blessed Saviour, *Matt. xii. 32.* That whosoever commits it hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. For, *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto Men. And he that speaketh a word against the son, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.* This sin against the Holy Ghost is that sin which St. *John* calls here, *The sin unto death.* Not because that sin deserves death alone, for so does all sin deserve death, both temporal and eternal, for the wages of sin, even

all sin, is death, *Rom. vi. 23.* But this sin against the holy Ghost, is called, *The Sin unto death*, because it binds a man over to eternal death without any possibility of recovery. Now some there are, that go on from one degree of sin to another, they heighten and aggravate their sins more and more, until they are brought to that height at last, as to commit that sin, for which there is no forgiveness,

There is no meer Man since the fall, that can live without sin, for all are sinners: but yet there are Degrees of sin: some sins in their own nature are small, others are more great and heinous. Many sins there are that are great, yet pardonable, and one sin there is unpardonable; and whosoever commits that one sin shall have no forgiveness, but must for ever bear the weight and punishment both of that and of all his other sins. There is such a sin as St. *John* speaks of here in my text, that is, *a sin unto death*. And now I come to the explication of the word, from whence I shall raise this point of doctrine.

Doct.) *That amongst others sins committed by fallen mankind, there is only one sin, that is, a sin unto death; and whosoever committeth that, he hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.*

Now for my further proceeding on this subject, I shall lay open to you.

First, what the sin unto death is.

Secondly,

Secondly, That all other sins how great and heinous soever, may be forgiven.

Thirdly, That this sin alone shall never be forgiven.

Fourthly, The reason why this sin alone is unpardonable. And then,

Lastly, I shall conclude all with a few words of application.

I shall begin first with the description of this unpardonable sin; where I shall endeavour to make as plain a description of it as possibly I can; and in doing of it, I shall, 1. Shew you negatively, what is not this sin. 2. I shall shew you positively what it is.

I. I shall shew you negatively, what is not this sin unto death; or in what degree a man may sin, and yet not commit that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

1. It is not every quenching of the motions of the spirit, that is this sin: It is true, when the holy Ghost comes with a still voice, and knocks at the door of Sinners for entrance, he often comes and strives with them, and secretly woes and beseeches them to leave their Sins and be converted; yet they quench and stifle all his motions, and bear up their hearts against him, and will not be obedient to his heavenly calls; now such sin grievously against the holy Ghost: but yet this alone is not the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost; for many that have stood it out a

long time, and have often quenched and grieved the holy spirit, yet at last they have been wrought upon unto sincere conversion.

2. A man may commit many heinous and crying sins, and yet not be guilty of the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost. A man may be an idolater, a whoremonger, a fornicator, a murtherer, and work witchcraft, and sin with a very high hand; nay, he may live in all manner of filthiness and lewdness, and yet not be under the guilt of the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost. Thus we read, 2. *Cbr. xxxiii.* that *Manasseth* sinned with a very high hand; he was an idolater, an inchanter, and worked witchcraft, and dealt with familiar spirits, and wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord. And *Mary Magdalen* had seven Devils cast out of her, *Luke viii. 2.* and yet both were pardoned.

3. A man may sin presumptuously against great light and knowledge, and yet not commit this sin unto death: For *Peter* when he denied Christ, he did it against great knowledge of Christ: he knew Christ to be his lord and saviour, he was one of Christ's beloved disciples, and for all that how strongly he denied Christ, and with an oath; and yet for all that Christ looked upon him with a merciful eye, and he repented, and was forgiven.

4. It is not every malicious sin that is the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost; for St.

Paul

Paul certainly had great malice in his heart, when he went on so furiously to persecute the church of God, and yet he was converted and became a preacher of the Gospel of Christ, which before he persecuted.

5. And *lastly*, It is not final unbelief, nor final impenitence, that is the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost, tho' some be of opinion that it is, because that sin is unpardonable, and Christ himself hath said, *Mat. xix. 31. That all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man, except it be the sin against the holy Ghost.* But you are to take the words of our Saviour in their true sense and meaning; it is all manner of sin and blasphemy committed within the compass of a man's life that shall be forgiven; except the sin against the holy Ghost; for the sin of final impenitence, and final unbelief, is not compleated until the very moment of a man's death; and then you all know, that there is no repentance, and consequently no pardon after death, for Christ saith. *He that sins against the Holy Ghost, hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.* Now, why should Christ say, *in this world*, if there be no space to be forgiven in this world? but a man may commit the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost, even many years before his death. Besides, there are many thousands that die in impenitence and unbelief, and are damned, and yet never committed the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost.

Thus have I shewed you negatively, what is not this unpardonable sin, none of those sins in particular is that sin.

II. I come now to shew you positively, what this sin unto death is, and wherein this unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost doth consist. Now here are several opinions in the world about it, only I will endeavour, through God's help, to lead you to the plain sight of it by the light of it, by the light of the holy scripture.

Now, in the first place, you must know, that there are two sorts of people that cannot commit this unpardonable sin.

I. The true believers cannot commit it, because it is a sin against great light and knowledge. Indeed, the greatest part of the World shall be damned; yet amongst the greatest part there are but few of them that can commit that unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Some have both lights and grace, these shall not commit the unpardonable Sin. Again, some have neither light nor grace, those cannot commit the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. Now there must be two ingredients to make up this unpardonable Sin; that is, light in the head and malice in the heart; without these two, the Sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be committed: for to sin against
great

what great light and knowledge, is not that Sin alone
 of sins nor yet to sin ignorantly without malice is that
 Sin but they must join both together, to make
 up this unpardonable Sin. This we seen plain-
 ly, by the example of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*;
Peter he denied Christ, and forswore himself
 too, and that grievously, against light and
 knowledge; for he knew Christ to be the only
 begotten son of God, and he knew God in
 him; he was one of Christ's disciples and one
 of his beloved disciples too; he was taught of
 Christ, and had experimental knowledge of
 his love and favour, and yet he wickedly with
 an oath, denied him. Now if *Peter* had done
 this out of malice and spight, then he had com-
 mitted that *Sin unto death*, for which there is
 no forgiveness. But *Peter* had no malice in his
 heart all this while, even at that Time when
 he denied Christ, as you may see, *Mat. xxvi.*
34, 35, when Christ told him, before the cock
 crow thou shalt deny me thrice: *he answered*,
 if I should die with thee, - I will not deny
 thee, and then denying him through infirmity
 and weakness of the flesh, when he had con-
 sidered what he had done, he went out and
 wept bitterly, *ver. 75.* and *Paul* he had a great
 malice and spight against the ways and people
 of God, as you may see, *Acts. ix. 1.* *Paul* brea-
 thed out threatings and slaughter against the
 disciples of the Lord, went unto the high-
 priest

priest, desiring of him letters to *Damascus*, to the synagogues, that if he found any of his way whether men or women, he should bring them bound to *Jerusalem*. Now here was great rage and malice in *Saul*, against the ways and people of God: but doing it ignorantly he at last heard a voice saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* and seeing a light from heaven, and hearing it was Jesus that he persecuted, he was pricked at the heart, and trembling and astonished said, *Lord what wilt thou have me to do;* now by these two places of scripture you may plainly see that *Peter* sinned against great light, and *Paul* out of great malice, yet none of them committed the unpardonable Sin against the holy Ghost. But whensoever light and malice meet together in one man, then there is the Sin against the holy Ghost. Now as all other Sins, so is this Sin against the Holy Ghost.

1. In thought; that is, when a wicked man against his clear light and knowledge, doth but conceive a malicious thought or purpose towards persecuting the Gospel of Christ, or of the saints of Christ, to hinder the work of the holy Ghost in them.

This Sin, as is to be thought, was the Sin of the lost Angels, for which cause they were lost without all hopes of pardon. Now some dispute, whether the Sin was the Sin of the thought

thought; but I say in all likelihood it was: for the Angels being only spirits, without bodies, and so having no use of bodily tongues, it could not be committed in word, nor yet could they commit it in action, because they were cast out of Heaven before they could bring it into practise; therefore it must be a Sin of the Thought.

Now the Sin was this; their habitation being in the highest heavens, and under God himself. They had exceeding great light and knowledge; they had more knowledge than all the Men in the World ever had, and were happy above all other Creatures: but when not being contented with this Estate, they thought to be as high as God himself; therefore they maliciously sought to make war against the son of God, and put him out of his throne; for which cause they were immediately thrust out of Heaven, never more to see the face of mercy; and thus from the beginning they have been counted malicious and revengeful, as raging beasts, and as roaring lions; thus their sin being of the same nature with the sin against the Holy Ghost, they were excluded all hopes of pardon.

But that the sin of our first parents was not the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost, is clear; for though they sinned against great light, yet they obey'd, and complied with the

the will of God, even when the tempter came, untill at last they were enticed and overcome; but they did not fall maliciously, and so were not excluded all Possibility of Mercy.

2. This sin may be committed in word too; that is, when a man speak blasphemously and maliciously of Christ and his holy ways. This was the Sin of the *Scribes and Pharisees*. Mark. iii. 22. *There were certain Scribes came and said, this fellow hath Belzebub, and casteth out devils by the prince of Devils.* Therefore saith Christ unto them, ver. 28, 29, *Verily I say unto you, all Sins shall be forgiven to the Sons of men, and blasphemies, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghosts hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.*

Now the reason of this speech of our blessed Saviour, is shewed in ver. 30 because they said, *he hath an unclean spirit*; which plainly shews that these scribes have spoken blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: these scribes were great learned men, as they could know no other but that Christ was the son of God, and they knew that he cast out devils by the spirit of God, and yet they, out of spight to Christ, maliciously and blasphemously said, *That he cast out devils by Belzebub the chief of devils.* Thus the scribes committed the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, and that in word.

3. This Sin may be committed in action too; that

that is, when a man being once thoroughly enlightened, having entered upon a holy course of life, and tasted the comfort of God's spirit, and some foretaste of the Joys of Heaven, and not only makes profession of the gospel, but teaches it to others; does at last take a dislike of these holy courses, and through spite and malice, utterly forsakes, opposes, and persecutes those good ways of God, which he before profest and taught. But to sum up this point, this unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost is fully described by the apostle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. x. 26, 27, 29 For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace? likewise, *Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.* For it is impossible for those who were made partakers of the holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away to renew them again to repentance, seeing they crucify themselves afresh the son of God, and put him to open shame

I shall a little explain these words, and then proceed.

1. This Sin unto death is an opposing Sin; now to oppose a thing, is to contradict it, or gainsay it; when a man says a thing is so, and so, and he denies it, and it is not so; when a man says a thing must be done, he says again it must not, nor shall not be done; such an Opposition is in the heart of him that commits this unpardonable Sin; but a Man may be an opposing man, and yet may not commit this Sin: Therefore,

2. It is the truth he must oppose; that is, he must utterly oppose and reject Christ, who said, *I am the truth*, Joh. xiv. 9. He opposeth all his threatnings, and will not believe his promises, and counts the blood of the Covenant to be an unholy thing: nay, he also opposeth the spirit of Christ, who is the spirit of truth. So that he will not obey his motions, and will not be led nor guided by him; but a man may oppose the truth, and do it ignorantly: Therefore,

3. It must be the known truth that he opposeth; he must be once enlightened: But you must know, that it is not only a natural knowledge, and humane learning. He may know much of God, and of his will, in the letter of the word, and yet not be capable of committing this unpardonable sin: but he must be so far enlightened

enlightened as to see the evil that is in sin, and the excellency of Christ; he must taste of the heavenly gift, and be made partaker of the Holy Ghost; and taste of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and by the blood of the covenant, which he counts as an unholy thing, he is in part sanctified and cleansed from many Sins he must have sweet communion with God in his word and Sacrament; he must have some taste of the love and favour of God, and comforts of his spirit, and be refreshed by it, and taste of the joys of heaven, and have some foretaste of the happiness of the world to come.

This is that light and knowledge that lays a man open to the committing of that unpardonable sin: but yet a man may not sin against all this light and experimental knowledge, and yet do it thro' the weakness of the flesh, or thro' some violent Temptations, as *Peter* did when he denied Christ: Therefore,

4. He must oppose the known truth wilfully; he must wilfully fall away, after he had received the knowledge of the truth: other sins are committed through infirmity, but this sin is wilful, the will is the chief actor in it; and to compleat and make up this unpardonable Sin, there is,

5. Malice in the heart without this, this sin cannot be committed; it must be a malicious opposing of the known truth; that is, when a
man

man being once enlightned. and having tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and hath been made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and hath had some sweet relish and foretaste of heaven, he comes to take a dislike, and to hate the holy ways of God, and maliciously oppose and prosecute them, in despite to the spirit of grace, and to die, crucifying a-fresh the son of God, and putting him to open shame.

Now a man having gone thus far, he comes, in the last place to be an apostate; for thus to oppose wilfully and maliciously the known truth, is always joyn'd with final and total apostacy: for he that is far enlightened, as to see the evil of sin, and the excellency of Christ and holiness, and hath been made a partaker of the Holy Ghost, of his graces and comforts, and tasted of God's love and favour in Jesus Christ, and has some foretaste of the joys of the world to come; for such a one wilfully, spitefully, and maliciously to fall away, he so falls never to rise more. It is true, the Children of God fall, and that often and rise again: but then they fall through weakness or infirmity, and not wilfully and maliciously; but these wicked wretches fall wilfully and maliciously, and so fall finally. Against such, the door of mercy is ever shut; concerning such, St Peter saith, *It had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they had known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* But it hap-
pened

opened to them according to the true proverb, the
 of God, dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow
 y Ghost, that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,
 etaste of 2 Pet. ii. 21. 22. There is such a dreadful
 to hate place in scripture against these kind of apos-
 oppose rates; that is, Heb. x. 26, *For if we sin wilful-*
 spirit of ly, *after we have received the knowledge of the*
 e son of truth, *there remaineth no sacrifice for sin, but a*
 mes, in fearful looking for of, judgment and fiery indig-
 to op- nation. Thus have I given you five steps as
 ruth, is so many links in a chain; all which make up
 cy: for the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.
 evil of It is a wilful and malicious opposing of the
 holiness known truth, joined with final apostacy. Thus
 Ghost, have I shewed you, as plain as I can, what
 God's this Sin unto death is. Now to proceed,

Secondly, The next thing to be considered is,
 that all other sins or blasphemies whatsoever
 may be forgiven; be our sins never so great and
 many, though we be the vilest wretches that
 ever lived, yet there is hopes of pardon upon
 repentance. *Manasses* was the vilest wretch
 that we ever read of, yet he repented and was
 pardoned: Also *Mary Magdalen* was the chief
 of Sinners, for out of her came seven devils;
 yet, because she loved much, much was forgiven
 her. A man may be a whoremonger, an a-
 dulterer, and work witchcraft, and deal with
 familiar spirits, and yet at last he may repent
 and be saved, and yet I have heard talk of
 some that are so foolish as to take the Sin of
 for-

fornication a sin unpardonable, from God's own words in the fourth Commandment. *the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers, unto the third and fourth generation:* From whence they say, that children that are base-born are not saved, unto the third and fourth generation: But this is a most erroneous interpretation of God's words: it is those that hate him, and continue hating of him, that he will visit their iniquities upon. For fornicators and adulterers themselves may repent and be saved, much more the children who know nothing, nor could help nothing: For Christ with his own mouth tells the scribes and pharises, *Matth. xxi. 31.* that the publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before them; for there is no sin but is pardonable, except the sin against the holy Ghost. But,

Thirdly, This sin against the holy Ghost, is alone the sin unto death; that is, a sin unpardonable, never to be forgiven neither in this world, nor in the world to come: Not because the merits of Christ is not sufficient to pardon it; for this sin, as well as other sins, are but finite, whereas the merits of Christ are infinite.

Object. *What is the reason then that this sin cannot be forgiven?*

Answer. This question brings me to the fourth thing considerable; do but mind me a little, and

and I will as plain and as clear as I can, tell you what the reason is.

This sin is called the sin against the holyghost, because it is a sin against the person of the holy Ghost, for so is all sin against his person; but it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, because it is against the office and work of the holy Ghost. Now every one of the three persons have their particular work: The work of the father is to create; the work of the son is to redeem lost sinners; and the work of the holy Ghost is to enlighten, convince, sanctify, and convert them. Now a man committing this unpardonable Sin against the holy Ghost, rejects all this work of the spirit. Now for a man to be so thoroughly enlightened by the holy Ghost, that he comes to know the evil of Sin, and his lost and undone Condition without Christ, and that none but the merits of Christ can save him; and notwithstanding wilfully and maliciously to oppose him, and the work of his spirit, and to refuse to be beholden to him for salvation; now for such a one, I say, to be forgiven, is utterly impossible.

Object. But why is it impossible? Nothing is impossible with God.

Answer. Nothing is impossible with God that does not imply a Contradiction: But that God will forgive the Sin committed against the holy Ghost, implies a Contradiction: For now can he

he have pardon given him that utterly rejoice it? As for instance.

A man thro' ignorance may deny Christ, and maliciously fall from the profession of the truth into all kind of wickedness, as did *St. Paul*, and the *Jews* that crucified Christ: and yet not falling against light and knowledge, there is room for the holy Ghost to work upon him, to enlighten him, and to convince him of his folly, and so make away for conversion. But for a man, when he is once enlightened by the holy Ghost, and has had some taste of God's love and favour, and some foretaste of the joys of heaven, and then at last utterly opposing this illuminating work of the spirit, wilfully and maliciously to fall away, and so to reject the spirit's renewing work; alas! Then the holy Ghost is done, he has nothing more than that he can work in him for this wretched creature has utterly rejected him, his enlightning work, his convincing work, his sanctifying work, he has utterly rejected Christ's pardon, heaven and all. Now this poor wretch is past all hopes of mercy, all hopes of pardon; nay, for such a one we are forbidden to pray; as you see in the verse, whereof my text is a part. Now Christ prayed for them that maliciously crucified him, *Luke xxxiii. 24.* saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do,* Alas! they know not what they were a doing, for had they known it, they would not have

cru-

rejoice crucified the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. ii. 8. But
 if they had known and yet crucified him,
 Christ would not have spent his breath to pray
 for them; for it would have been utterly in-
 vain: For when a man has committed this un-
 pardonable sin, neither the praying in heaven
 nor earth can do him any good; for as the
 text saith, *There is a sin unto death.*

I shall conclude all with a few words of Ap-
 plication; and I will be as short as possible
 lest this discourse should be too large for so
 small a book: Here is,

First, A word of comfort.

Secondly, A word of counsel.

First, A word of comfort. It may be with
 hearing and reading of this terrible discourse,
 your hearts begin to ake for fear that you have
 committed this unpardonable sin: But, I think,
 I have sufficiently proved to you what it is; and
 I tell you again, that there are but few that can
 commit it; nay, there are millions that are tor-
 mented in hell, yet never committed this sin:
 Nay, farther, an ignorant protestant may thro'
 weakness, and out of a slavish fear, turn papist,
 and renounce his profession, and yet not commit
 this unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost:
 For doing it out of ignorance and infirmity,
 there may be matter left for the Holy Ghost to
 work upon whereby he may yet be converted
 and saved. Consider this also, if you are afraid
 that you have committed it, and wish that
 you

you had not committed it, and wish that you had not committed it, if it were to do again, then that is a true sign that you have not committed it.

Secondly, I must conclude all with a word of counsel.

I. Watch very diligently against all sin : But above all, take special heed of those Sins that come near to the sin against the holy Ghost ; and they are these : hypocrisy, taking only the outward profession of religion, and so dissimbling and mocking of God ; sinning wilfully against conviction of conscience, and against great light and knowledge, sinning presumptuously (with an high hand :) These sins, though none of them are the direct Sin against the Holy Ghost, yet they will come very near to it ; therefore take special heed of them, lest they, in time, should bring you to the committing of that unpardonable Sin. And,

II Labour to be sincere in religion, and by a true faith ingraft yourselves in Christ, for they that be in Christ, can never commit this unpardonable Sin : For know this, that among all the Sins committed by fallen mankind, there is one Sin that is a *sin unto death*, which is the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost, which whosoever commits hath no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.

Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you Understanding.

The End of the First SERMON.

T H E

Saint's Duty and Exercise:

Or, An Earnest

Invitation to the Throne of Grace.

The First Part.

Theff. v, 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

TO the glory of God, and the good of souls, there is no subject more necessary for me to write upon, than to stir people to the duty of prayer, both in their families and in secret. I find it a duty most sadly neglected, not only among the prophane sort of people indeed, they seldom or never part in their families, therefore it is to be feared much less do they pray in secret. But I have been amongst such as seem to be the best of people, that are full and righteous in their dealings towards others, that delight to hear the best preachers, and join with the best assemblies, and are very kind and courteous towards others, and yet they neglect prayer in their families. Some of them I know do pray in their families on evenings before they go to bed. But as for those that make conscience of performing the duty of prayer in their families, both morning and evening, they are so few that there are but here and there one to be found of them: This is a case very much be-

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wailed

wailed and lamented : Nay in this one duty I have
 have just cause to condemn myself ; for I may well
 write with shame enough, that this duty of souls
 prayer has been too much neglected by me as well
 well as by others : Nay, to this day, I find in me
 much averſeneſs and backwardneſs to this duty
 ty, ſo much ſloathfulneſs, deadneſs, and dullneſs
 neſs of ſpirit ; and ſometimes one luſt, or one habit
 vanity or other ſteals into my Heart, which
 makes me think myſelf to be unfit for this duty
 duty of prayer, and I find it ſometimes very
 hard to paſs over all the difficulties, and perſe-
 form the duty of prayer aright. This makes
 me the more to pity others, looking upon others
 others to be in the ſame condition with myſelf.
 But, conſider friends, this is the work of the
 devil, who does what he can either to keep us
 from prayer, or elſe to diſturb us in prayer.
 So it was with the children of God, *Job* i. Then
 ſons of God there came and preſented themſelves
 ſelves unto the Lord. But what to do ? I anſwer
 ſwer, it was to pray and make ſupplication unto
 to the Lord. Then it is ſaid that ſatan came among
 among them : But what did he come among them
 them for ? I anſwer it was, if he could to keep
 them from their duty, or elſe diſturb them in
 their duty ; by filling them either with wandering
 dering or diſtracted thoughts, thereby to cauſe
 them to loſe the benefit of the duty. Alas
 friends, faithful prayer is that which the devil
 cannot endure ; for there is no weapon of power

the duty of powerful for the weakening satan's kingdom,
or I may and setting up the kingdom of Christ in the
duty of souls of sinners, than prayer is.

by means of The devil is content that we should read,
I find and come to Church, and hear sermons, with-
out much disturbance, because he thinks he
and devil may easily keep us from profiting by the word;
but he labours with all his might, to keep us
from prayer and meditation, because he knows
for that these duties weaken his kingdom. But,
my friends, let not you and I yield ourselves
and prey to satan's temptations, but resist him, and
his make us up ourselves to take hold on God, and call
upon upon his name by constant and fervent prayer.

with myself Certainly, if the wickedness of the *Sodomites*
mark of therieved and vexed the soul of righteous *Lot*, it
to keep would grieve him much more if he were now
in prayer amongst us in this degenerate age, and saw
Job i. The wickedness abounds in this world: How
ted them God is by one judgment or another frowning
do? I am upon us for our ungodly doings; how that
ication upon the end of all things is near at hand, and yet
an came how many prayerless persons and families there
me among amongst us; how many multitudes of peo-
ld to keep e can rise in the morning, and go about
b them their concerns in the world, and then to bed
with war again at night, and never regard to pay in
by to cause their families, but live as if they had not a
ty. Alas God to seek; as if they had not an everlasting
h the devil to prepare for: Friends, let me desire
upon now to consider these few things.

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First,

First, Consider that your neglect of prayer is a sign that you are none of God's children but you are yet in your unregenerated and unconverted state and condition; and it were better that you had never been born, than that you should die in such a condition. O consider that your breath is in the hands of God, and he may stop it whensoever he pleaseth; you cannot assure yourselves of an hour to live, and is it not then a dangerous thing to live in the neglect of prayer? O friends! How dare you go forth in the morning without prayer, lest death should meet you before night, and cast you into hell; or, how dare you at night lie down in your beds, before you have been at the throne of grace, and pleaded there with the Lord, by prayer, for grace, pardon and mercy, lest you should awake before morning in the flames of hell: O do but consider now and then upon this, how exceeding dangerous is it to live in the neglect of prayer. But if you have the spirit of prayer, if you give yourself up to constant fervent prayer, this is a sign of your new birth; and whensoever death comes you are safe. You know that a child as soon as it is born cries; so a sinner as soon as he is born again, falls a crying unto God, as it was said of *Paul*, as soon as he was born again. *Behold he prayeth*, Act iv, 11. It is the spirit of adoption that makes us cry, *Abba Father*.

Secondly, Consider the end thy God requires prayer, and let that encourage you to the duty, God does not require prayer that he may receive from us, for he is infinitely and perfectly happy without us, and therefore needs not our performances: But God being willing to bestow those good things we need, and to communicate that grace and mercy, without which we are miserable for ever, therefore it pleaseth God, out of his infinite goodness, to require prayer, to make us fit for the mercy which he knows we want: Therefore the Lord commands us to pray always, *Luke xxi. 36. Pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the son of man.* See *1 Tim. ii. 8. Rom. xii. 12. Phil. iv. 6.* And also here in the text, *Pray without ceasing.*

Thirdly, Consider while you are strangers to prayer, you are slaves to the devil, and he is doing what he can to work out your utter ruin and destruction: The devil is said in scripture to fill the hearts of the ungodly, to keep possession of them, and to work in the children of disobedience. And truly the devil finds abundance of prey, for some watch not at all, nor pray not all against him. And they that pray not, are led captive by satan at his pleasure, and they do not care nor desire to have his snare broken, nor themselves recovered. Friends, consider, the more you ne-

glect prayer, the stronger your corruptions will grow, and the more sin will encrease in you, and the more fit you will be for utter ruin and destruction. But on the other side, the oftner you pray, and the more frevently you pray, the more sin and corruption weaken in you, and more fit you are for grace and mercy: as it is a remarkable speech among Mr. Dod's saying, *prayer will make a man give over sinning, or else sin will make a man give over praying.* O! friends, as ever you desire to be deliver'd out of the thralldom of the devil, as ever you desire the salvation of your souls, as ever you desire to find grace and mercy at the hand of God, be perswaded to give yourselves in earnest fervent prayer. But,

Fourthly, Consider, those that are strangers to prayer, the God of heaven is against them. O dreadful! Who are they that can stand before his indignation? Who can defend him against that arm that is omnipotent? The mountains quake, the hills melt, and the very devils tremble before this God, sure it is dreadful to have so glorious and great a God an enemy: But an enemy he is to all them who do count his favour and mercy not worth praying for: Those that do not intreat this God to be reconciled, now whilst he offers to be reconciled to them, it is a sign they neither value his love, nor fear his wrath; there-

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ere his wrath they must abide, except they
do in good earnest seek unto him.

Fifthly. Consider, they that are Strangers to
Prayer, and will not cry to God, now in the Day
of their visitation, whilst pardon and mercy may
be had, they must look to be neglected when
they are forced to cry, when misery and distress
cover them. O read and tremble at the place,
in Prov. i. 26, 27, 28. *I will laugh at your
Calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh :
when your fear cometh as Desolation : when dis-
tress and anguish comes as dissolution ; when distress
and anguish comes upon you : then shall they call
upon me, but I will not answer : they shall seek
me, but they shall not find me.* My friends if you
will not seek the Lord now, whilst he may be
found, if you will not call upon him now, whilst
he is near, Isa. xi. 6. *You may at last be forced
to cry in your Extremity, and not be regarded.*

Sixthly. Consider, you that live in the neglect
of prayer, that quickly the accepted time, which
you improve not, will be past and gone ; and
then you shall beg ; yea, and beg earnestly, but
must certainly be denied. We read in scripture
of Calls that have not been regarded ; the foolish
virgins came after the door was shut, and cryed
Lord, Lord, open unto us ; but alas ! they spoke
when it was too late, therefore the reply was, *I
know you not whence you are,* Matt. xxv. 10, 11, 12
when the rich man in hell begged for a drop of
water to cool his tongue, this was not granted,

Luke xv. to intimate that not the least mercy in hell is to be expected, nor the least mitigation of torments is to be looked for : all then will be ready to pray, Lord, open the door that letteth into thy kingdom and glory: Lord vouchsafe a little respite, a little ease in the midst of our torment. O but then God's Ear will be stopp'd, Heaven's gate will be shut, and mercy will be gone for ever. O what a madness is it then to waste all our precious time, and not come to the throne of grace before the day of grace come to an end.

Seventhly and Lastly, If you live in the neglect of prayer, your common mercies to you, for that threatening is fulfilled upon them, *Mal. ii. 2. I will send a curse upon you, and curse your blessings.* Prayer will turn curses into blessings; afflictions are part of the curse which are inflicted because of sin : but prayer alters the nature of them, and turns them into mercies and blessings; for the sanctification of them being begged by prayer, and granted, they work together for the good of them: *For* (saith the apostle) *afflictions yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.* On the other side, where prayer is not, there blessings are turned into curses, and good things which are received work together for the shame and ruin of those that do enjoy them. Common mercies are made a curse unto prayerless persons; so if they continue in the neglect

of prayer, they must certainly miss of those especial saving-mercies revealed in the gospel. As pardon of sin, justification by Christ, adoption, sanctification by the spirit, deliverance from Hell, eternal happiness in the life to come, and God hath determined and declared in his word, that those that will have these things must seek them : but if they seek them not by earnest fervent prayer, it is a sign they understand not the worth of them, and therefore must certainly and justly go without them. God is not so prodigal of his mercies and favours, as to fling them away upon those persons that do not think them worth a praying for. These considerations I have given you as an Introduction to the matter ensuing, that you may be the more stirred up to mind what I have to write : and if you have hitherto neglected prayer; that you would now in good earnest set about it. O you that are strangers to prayer, consider that you are all this while in a most woeful and miserable condition ; for you are in your sins, slaves to the devil, mere strangers to God, and under his wrath and curse ; and if you should die in this condition, you are undone for ever. And if you will not seek unto the Lord by earnest prayer, that you may be delivered out of this condition ?

You want a pardon, you want Christ and grace, and you are undone if you have not these soul-blessings, and you will not ply the throne

of grace for the obtaining of them: friends if you did but seriously consider your state and your wants, you would find it necessary to obey the words of the apostle here in the text, to *pray without ceasing*. Now the point of doctrine which I shall raise from these words in this: That it is both the duty and work of every true christian, to *pray without ceasing*. Now in my further handling of this point concerning prayer, I shall endeavour, *First*, to shew what prayer is. *Secondly*, what it is to pray continually. *Thirdly*, to shew some reasons why we ought to pray without ceasing. *Lastly*, to make application

First, what prayer is: in short prayer is an earnest and fervent offering up our desires to God by faith, in the name Jesus Christ, for those good things that are agreeable to God's will and our own necessity: now there must concur those two things to make up the duty of prayer, *1st*. an earnest and fervent desire, a longing desire after those graces and blessings we come to God for, for there are some that come frequently to the throne of grace, and offer a form of words, in a praying way: I say a form of words, either composed ready to their hands, or else of their own composing: and so they come to God with expressions of words, without an hearty desire after those graces and mercies they seem to pray for; but their desires run out after other things; after their lust, their covetousness, and the things of this world; and yet they will seem

seem to pray mightily against sin, and fleshly lusts, which they have no desire to be rid of; and for the obtaining of those graces and spiritual mercies, which they are not sensible of their want of, nor have any desire to attain. But yet they will often make use of prayer, either as a veil to hide and cover their wickedness, and to shew themselves to the world to be religious, or else as a devile, to quiet their consciences in a course of sin; and so they make confession of sin to serve instead of forsaking of sin, and praying instead of repeating. Now such a kind of prayer is abominable to the Lord; yea, this kind of praying, is indeed no praying, but only babling, dissembling, and mocking of God; yea, it is a lying unto God; *Ephraim*, (saith God) *compasseth me about with lies*, Hof. xi. 12. Hypocrites do nor pray, but instead of praying they lie unto God, they make as if they had desire to know God, to love and obey God, to be holy and heavenly, when indeed they have no heart, no desire to any such thing. This is the first concurrence to make up the duty of prayer, which is a hearty and fervent desire after those graces and good things we pretend to pray for, without which our praying is no praying, but babling and mocking of God. 2 The other concurrence to make up the duty of prayer is this: an offering up of our desires, either with the mind or voice, for if our desires are never so great to attain

attain grace and mercy, yet if we do not offer these desires up with mind and voice, our saving of these desires alone is not praying, but where there are hearty fervent desires after grace and mercy, and those desires are expressed, either by sighing, groaning, whispering, speaking, or by voice; this is praying indeed. And this shall be sufficient to shew what prayer is.

Secondly. The next thing I promised to shew is, what it is to pray without ceasing. Now to pray without ceasing, is not to do like unto that sect, who thought that prayer was to be their whole business; no, no, there are other duties which God hath required, and prayer must not come in the way of other duties, to shuffle them out. But in general to pray without ceasing, implies a taking hold of, and improving of all those seasons and opportunities, wherein God and our own necessities calls us unto prayer; this is to pray without ceasing. But more particularly to pray with ceasing, implies.

First, A being always in a disposition and frame to pray, whensoever God requires it. The heart must be reconciled to the duty of prayer, and fall in love with it, and come to the throne of grace with delight, and also be continually resisting of that backwardness and Indisposition to prayer, whenever the season of prayer approach, and always to watch our hearts to keep them in a praying frame.

Secondly,

Secondly, To pray without ceasing, implies a praying, in every state and condition of life it pleaseth God to call us to; for without prayer, sickness will be un sanctified, and health will be a judgment; without prayer, health and prosperity will be a snare, and will occasion a forgetfulness of God, and a daring to rebel against him, and will serve to encourage a neglect of the soul, and of another world, and without prayer, adversity will be intolerable, and if it be removed, it will be in anger. Thus no condition should cause a neglect of prayer.

Thirdly, To pray without ceasing, implies a persevering in prayer, and never to give over until we have our request granted. God in his wisdom is pleased sometimes to cause us to stay longer for a mercy before it comes, both to make the mercy the sweeter to us when it comes, and also for the trial of his people's patience, whether they will persevere and continue waiting at the throne of grace, and those that are true believers will be content to wait, and to wait in God's way, until their prayers are granted: so did the woman of *Canaan*, when she came to Christ for mercy, wait; though at her first sute, Christ gave her no answer at all, yet she, notwithstanding, continued her sute with more earnestness, crying after him. But then Christ, though he spake, yet gave a seeming denial; and told her, that he was not sent but only to be lost sheep of *Israel*: and yet she would

would not give over, but cried again for help: but yet intlead of helping her, he called her dog, and told her, that it was not meat to take the children's bread, and cast it to the dogs. Then instead of leaving off her sute, she came to Christ with great humility; she acknowledged herself to be a dog. She acknowledged her own unworthiness of mercy; but yet she despaired not, but by faith pleaded Christ's mercy and bounty; telling him, *Though I be- ing a dog, am not worthy to be made a partaker of the children's bread, yet the dogs may eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.* This shews how thankful she would have been for the least crumbs of mercy: where- upon Jesus immediately commanded the greatness of her faith; and as it were, gave her the key of his treasure, and bid her take whatsoever she wanted, whether mercy for herself, or mercy for her daughter, *O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Thus I have shewed what prayer is, and what is it to *pray without ceasing.*

Thirdly, the next thing is to give some reasons why it is her duty and work of every Christian to *pray without ceasing.*

First. We should pray continually, because God is always ready to hear; and though God knows our wants, is ready at all times to be- stow upon us whatsoever we want, yet the Lord in his wisdom would have us to wait up-
on

help: on him by fervent prayer for those spiritual good things we want; nor that prayer moves God, but because continual fervent prayer makes us fit to receive the mercy we come unto him for; if God should bestow his special saving mercy upon a Sinner before he is fit for it, the mercy would be but little priz'd by him, and God would have but little return of praise and thanks from him. Therefore, for this reason, God will be sought unto for his especial mercies before he will bestow them. After God had promised to pardon, renew, and to hear *Israel*, yet he appoints prayer, as a means to bring down these mercies, before he will bestow them, *Ezek. xxxvi. 37.* For all this, *I will be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do this for them.* Consider, friends, pardon is ready, and grace is ready, and mercy is ready to embrace you Sinners.

Secondly, We must pray without ceasing continually, because Christ is continually praying for us; Christ prayed night and day for us, when he was upon earth, even, until he was in an agony, and now he is in heaven he makes continual intercession for us, *Heb. vii. 25.* Christ in heaven is always presenting to his father his suffering, and by his sufferings and blood shed, all that we pray for has been purchased; the blood of Jesus Christ cries in God's ear on the behalf of those that pray, that the curse that Christ hath bore may be removed

moved from them, that the sin for which Christ was wounded may be forgiven them; that out of his fulness they may receive grace for grace; and that for his sake they may be delivered from the wrath to come. Now, friends, if Christ prayed for us so long, and so fervently, until he was in an agony, and still prays for us in heaven; shall we yet lose the benefit of all for want of praying for ourselves? O for *shame*! Seeing Christ doth his part, let us do ours.

Thirdly, We must pray without ceasing, because the spirit is always ready to help our infirmities, *Rom. viii. 26*. The spirit is ready to instruct us what to pray for; as to remove the load of indisposition to this duty, to quicken our deadness is the duty, to enlarge our desires after grace; and to strengthen us to wrestle for a blessing.

Fourthly, We must pray continually, because satan is always ready to assault us; he *goes about like a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour*, 1 *Pet. v. 8*. Satan is never idle, he is always following us with snares of temptations, our life is full of temptations, and shall we not continually praying against satan and his assaults? wicked spirits are continually engaged against us: *We wrestle*, saith the apostle, *with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places*, *Eph. vi. 12*. We had need therefore to pray without ceasing, seeing

seeing they cease not endeavouring to bring us both to sin and ruin.

Fifthly and *last*, we should pray without ceasing, because our corruptions quickly get strength upon the least neglect of prayer. If by our watching, praying, and wrestling with God, we have got some strength and power against our corruptions, as anger, pride, covetousness, fleshly lusts, sensuality, and our affections are moved, and inflamed towards God and heavenly things, and we are got into a state of grace, and if we once let down our watch, and neglect prayer, our corruptions will get strength again, and our graces will decay, and our love to God, and holy things will decay: Now all these things considered, we may see that it is necessary for us to take care that we be not careless, slight and negligent in our performance of this duty of prayer, but stir up ourselves in the performance of this duty, and to pray without ceasing.

Thus have I done with the doctrinal part: But before I proceed, I shall answer an objection which may lie in the way.

One objection which some will make is this, whether they ought to pray with a form? Some there be that hold a form of prayer, and some be against it.

Now in answering this objection, I shall endeavour to reconcile both parties: You must note, that there are two kinds of prayer commanded

manded by God : *First*, publick or family prayer, *secondly*, secret prayer.

For the first of these, if you be about publick or family prayer, and are the speaker, it is most convenient for you to pray in a set-form of words, suited to the general necessities of those that join with you, and the necessities of mankind is general throughout the world. Such forms of those are already composed by many eminent divines. I say, in publick or family prayer, it is most convenient to pray in such a set composed form of words, that those which join with you, being acquainted with your matter, may with more readiness go along with you in your expressions. And as for the lawfulness of those forms, consider, that Christ hath given us a set-form of prayer, which is the *Lord's Prayer*. Now this form Christ hath given us both to be a rule and pattern to direct us in prayer, and also to be used in our prayers; the command of Christ in *Mat. vi. 9.* is in these words, *After this manner pray ye*, that is to teach us, that the *Lord's prayer* is given us not only to be used as a form, but also to be a rule for directing us to pray, according to that pattern. But in *Luke xi. 2.* the command of Christ is in these words, *when you pray, say, Our father, &c.* This is also to teach us, that the *Lord's prayer* is used not only as a pattern or rule : but also a form to be u-

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To conclude this, writers record, that forms were used when our Saviour Christ was upon the earth, and Christ joined with them in those forms: And yet Christ neither contradicted these forms, nor blamed them for using them. Therefore if your objection be concerning publick or family prayer, I have sufficiently answered that.

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But *Secondly*, if your objection be concerning secret prayer, I shall soon resolve you in that it: if you ask whether you ought to pray in secret by a form? This is the same thing as if you should ask, whether a man ought to make use of his legs, or make use of his crutches to walk with? For you all know, that if a man be lame, and cannot use his legs, he ought to walk by crutches until he can have the use of his legs and fling his crutches aside: Even so those that have hitherto been strangers to prayer, and also to themselves who are weak, and have not attained unto the gift of prayer, and therefore they know not how to pray, these ought to pray by a form, and to make use of such forms as may lead them to the knowledge of their own particular sins, and their own necessities; and then, as soon as they can come to know themselves, their own particular sins and wants, so as to confess them; their own corruptions and inclina-

clinations, so as to lament over them, their own temptations, so as to pray against them; also their own wants, that they may beg of God to have them supplied; then they ought no longer to use a form, but to lay it aside as useless, because they are able to express their own particular wants without it. And besides, there are no written forms of prayer, that can fute with the state and condition of every particular christian; for one christian is under one circumstance, and another under another; therefore every one ought to study his own sins, temptations; and wants, and then fall to prayer, according as he finds his own condition to be. But, for a man under whatsoever circumstance he be, yet for him to use a form, it is a sign he prays for he knows not what. To give you an instance or two: Suppose you are a condemned malefactor, and were going to the king to beg a pardon, you would not need a written form of words to carry with you; for your own condition would teach you what to say. Or, suppose a beggar should come to your door in a miserable condition, ready to starve with hunger, you would soon hear how hard he would beg, what complaints he would make, and what arguments he would make to move your pity, without a written form of words: Even so, if you have but a true sight and sense of your sin and misery, and of your want of such and such soul mercies

mercies, you would not need a written form to teach you what to say to God, when you come to the throne of grace.

This I hope I have sufficiently satisfied you in answering this objection, whether you ought to pray by a set-form, or no?

Thus, having done with the doctrinal part, and answered this objections, I come now to the application. The first use shall be a use of lamentation. If it be such a necessary duty of every christian to pray without ceasing, then what shall we think of those that never pray, neither with their families nor yet in secret? They mind nothing but the things of this world, and the lust of the flesh, but never seek after God. Sure these needs must be in a sad miserable condition. This is a lamentation, and must be for a lamentation.

Secondly, The next use shall be of caution; let us be cautioned against these two things:

First, Let us take heed of a formal, dull, careless and heartless performance of this duty of prayer. Now that it may be avoided, take heed of rushing unpreparedly into God's presence. But if you ask, how shall I do to prepare myself aright for this duty of prayer? I answer, if you would pray so as your prayers may be accepted and granted, you must follow these directions.

1. Before you go to prayer, study the knowledge of yourselves. Examine how the case stands

stands between God and your souls, and which way your desires run; and if you find that your desires run heaven-wards, then examine the matter of your desires, what it is you would have God to do for you: study your Sins and wants, what corruption you desire to be rid of, and what graces you would have God to do for you; study your Sins and wants, what corruption you desire to be rid of, and what graces you would have God bestow upon you. If you do not acquaint yourselves with your care before-hand, you cannot expect to know it aright on a sudden; as you go to pray, if you do not actually look into your hearts and lives before you go to prayer, your souls will be unhumbled, and want that lively sense of your necessities, which must put life into your prayers. Before you pray, consider what Sin is, what God's wrath and hell is, and what lusts and corruptions are yet in you, and what grace and mercy you stand in need of. And this will make you pray, and pray to purpose, with all your heart.

2. As you go to prayer, take heed of vain and sinful thoughts, that they do not come in and spoil the duty. To this end, watch your hearts, your thoughts, and your affections, very carefully, that your heart be not ensnared with the love of money, Pleasures, or any lustful desires? the thoughts will easily follow the affections.

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3. When you come to God by prayer, come in such humility as befeemeth a condemned sinner, and yet in the faith and boldness that befeemeth a son and a member of Jesus Christ; do not conceive a conceit of thy worthiness in yourselfes, yet take heed of any despairing thoughts in prayer: but be as constant in every lawful request as you ask, as if you saw your glorious redeemer interceding for you with his Father. Faith and hope is the life of prayer, and Christ is the life of hope. If you pray, and think you shall never be the better for praying, your prayer will have but little life, therefore let a crucified and glorified Christ be always before your eyes in prayer, not in a picture, but in thoughts of a believing mind. See what the apostle saith to the *Hebrews*. Heb. iv. 14. 15. 19. *We have a great high priest that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, that was in points tempted as we are, and yet without Sin. Let us come therefore with boldness to the Throne of grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and have Grace, to help in time of Need.* Also, Heb. vi. 25. *He is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Yea, we have a promise by Christ for encouragement, *Job*, xiv. 13. *If you ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

4. Labour hard with your hearts all the time you are praying, to keep them in a reverent

rent, serious, fervent frame, and suffer them not to grow remiss and cold, prayer to turn into lip-labour, or into a life-less formality the heart may be senseless, though the voice seem to be earnest, and therefore the heart must be carefully watched, and diligently stirred up.

5. In the last place, the other caution I shall lay before you, is this : After you have done prayer, take heed of contenting yourselves with the bare performance of that duty, thinking your work is done when your prayer is done, but carefully examine how your thoughts have been, in what frame your hearts have been whilst you were praying, and then watch for a return of prayer. Do not think you have done enough, when you have done praying, but watch for a return of prayer, *David* had been praying, and then he was resolved to hearken what the Lord speak, *Psal. lxxxv.* 8. So the church, believing that the Lord would hear resolve to wait for him, *Matt. vii. 7.* *Therefore will I love the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my Salvation: my God will bear me.* Friends, if you do not watch for return of prayer, you do not consider what you do, or whom you have to do with, in prayer. When you pray, you engage in an ordinance, and shall that be used in vain; you are, therefore to stand upon your watch-tower, and to observe with the prophet, what God saith to you, *Heb. ii. 1.* This is the second use.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, the third and last use shall be of exhortation, for the stirring of you all up, both to family and secret prayer. As for family prayer : O be perswaded for the Lord's sake that you would make conscience of family prayer, not only in the evening, but every morning and evening. This is a duty that is most sadly neglected in this age. O! for the sake of your immortal souls, do not suffer your company business, and the delights of the world and flesh, to rob you of God's love, and to ruin your body and soul in hell for ever. Let me perswade you to take this counsel, that what company soever is at your house, at unseasonable times, tell them thus : *That is now time for you to be with your God, it is time for you to be at home, reading and praying in your families.* But if you cannot shake off your company and business in time, then do as *Abraham* did, *Gen. xxii. 5.* who said to the young man, *tarry you here, whilst I and this lad go yonder and worship.* Consider friends, your souls are more than ten thousand worlds ; and you had better neglect any thing in this world, than to neglect your souls. But, having said something for the perswading to family prayer, in my sermon on *Jeshua's* resolution, I need say no more of it here.

Therefore, *2dly*. Let me also exhort you to secret prayer ; for it is to be feared, that this is very much neglected amongst us ; nay, is not only neglected amongst loose prophane

C

Sinners,

Sinners, but also, it is to be feared, it is sadly neglected by professors, and those that are constant performers of family duties. Many that make conscience of praying in their families both night and morning, yet follow them to their chambers closets, and you shall see nothing of secret prayer. Friends I can tell you, and that by woeful experience too, that to pray aright is the hardest work in religion; and that by reason of those many opportunities, pull-backs, and hindrances in this duty; secret prayer is the greatest enemy the devil has; he cannot endure that people shall go to pray in secret, because no duty can be more powerful in the pulling down of Satan's kingdom in the soul, and setting up the kingdom of Christ, than secret prayer is.

Consider, that secret prayer, if fervent, is a striving against sin and corruption, for whenever we are a striving against sin, for duty and sin strive for the victory; whilst duty holds us up, Sin goes down, but when duty flags, Sin gets up. Secret pray, if hearty, will make us weary of Sinning, or else Sin will make us weary of such kind of praying. And if secret prayer once be a Wearisomness to us, it is a sad sign that Sin gets the upper-hand there cannot be a more effectual way for a sinner to kill his sin, than by secret prayer, a Sinner never fights against sin with a greater Zeal, nor with greater success than upon his knees.

When once a sinner comes to kneel in earnest before God, his lust must quickly kneel to him. Our confession of Sin, and laying of it open before the lord, our complaining to the Lord of it, our crying to the lord against it; pressing him upon his promise, upon his covenant to help it, these are the mightiest batteries that we can make for the beating down the strong hold of Sin. O, be persuaded to be instant and constant in secret prayer, set your times, for secret prayer, and keep your times, and make a firm resolution with yourselves to do it. Now for the farther stirring you up to the duty of secret prayer, consider these four things.

First, Consider that if you make Conscience of secret prayer daily and frequently, this would be an evident sign of your uprightness and sincerity; it is a sign that you seek God, himself, when none but God knows of your seeking of him. He is not a true christian outwardly, but he is a true christian that is one inwardly, whose praise is not of men, but of God, Rom. 21. 28. 29. But he that lives in the neglect of secret duties, though he pass in the World to be never so good a Christian, yet he is in God's account no better than a Hypocrite.

Secondly. Consider secret prayer is a marvelous way to thrive in Grace, and to grow rich towards God. By this means, faith will grow

exceedingly, our love to God will abound, our Souls, will prosper. O what a great benefit does he reap thereby! How good does he find God to be unto his soul! so that he can by experience say with the Psalmist, *Psal.* 86. 7. *That he is plenteous in mercy to all that call upon him.*

Thirdly, Consider, secret prayer is a means to fit you for publick ordinances: those that are the most upon their knees in their Chamber or closet, will receive most benefit in publick. God must be sought unto in secret to fit us for publick worship; those that before they come to hear, pray earnestly in secret, that the Gospel may come to them not in the word only, but in power also, for the cutting down the strong hold of sin, and for the building them up in grace and holiness; those are likely to find gospel working effectually upon them, and that is the power of God for their salvation, *Rom.* 1 16, 17. For I am ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.

Those that before they come to the Lord's supper, examine themselves alone, beg that God would fetch them, and are importunate with God for strength against every corruption, and

pride

our pride, covetousness, envy, anger, malice, also
 against a hard heart, sluggishness, and dulness
 of spirit, disordered affections, self-love, fen-
 suality, and the like; they also that beg for
 all the fruits of Christ's suffering, and for all
 the graces of his spirit, such as these are not
 like to be sent empty away.

Fourthly, Consider secret prayer is a means
 to keep publick duties upon the heart, after
 publick exercise is ended. Your work is not
 done when publick exercise is over; but you are
 immediately, as soon as you come home, to go
 alone, and in secret to pray over the word that
 you have heard: this, first, has any Sin been
 laid open to you wherein you know yourselves
 to be guilty? Then confess it, and bewail it,
 and beg pardon for it, and for strength against
 it, and resolve to set themselves against it for
 the time to come. *Secondly*, has any duty been
 pressed upon you? Then mention to God this
 duty in secret, to incline your heart to perform
 this duty.

Fifthly, consider, secret prayer is the way to
 have especial tokens of God's love, and those
 joys that a stranger does not intermeddle with,
 O the sweet meltings and thawings of the heart
 for sin, that the saints meet with in secret pray-
 er! O the visits that the great physician of
 souls does make to poor sinners in this duty!
 And the inward joy, peace and comfort, that
 the saints do meet with in their secret addresses

unto God by prayers ! And friends, should not this be a great encouragement to you to be frequent in secret prayer ; but if all this be not encouragement enough.

Consider in the *Sixth* and *Last* place, that you daily and fervently pray in secret, meditate and examine yourselves, and take pains with your own hearts in secret, God will reward you openly. This is the argument that Christ useth to enforce secret prayer, *Mat. 6. 6. When thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and shut the Door, and pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* As secret wickedness shall be openly punished, so shall secret duties be openly rewarded before men and angels at the last day.

Now in the next place, I shall give you some directions for the attaining of the gift of prayer, and also furnish you with matter of prayer who are bare of matter, as well for the help of those who are of a weak capacity : and because I would omit nothing that might be for the good of Souls, that may be a means and a way to help them to heaven, I have now, through the help of God, writ one treatise more upon this subject, to direct you now to attain to the gift of prayer, and supply you with matter for prayer, with some directions for short ejaculatory prayer, and the Lord give you understanding.

The End of the FIRST PART.

T H

THE Saint's Duty and Exercise:

Or, An Earnest

Invitation to the Throne of GRACE.

The Second PART.

1 Theff. v. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

IN my first (*The Saint's Duty and Exercise.*)
I shewed,

1st. What Prayer is.

2^{dly}. I gave some reasons why we should
pray without ceasing.

4^{tly} and lastly, I made some application :
Where,

1. I gave an use of Lamentation.

2. An Use of Caution.

3. An Use of Exhortation. But,

Because this duty of prayer is of so great consequence, that the right performance of it shews a man or woman to be in a converted and renewed state, and in their way to heaven and eternal glory, but the neglect of this great duty, shews plainly whatever they think of themselves, yet they are yet in their unconverted and unrenewed state, and so in the broad way to hell and damnation ; I shall therefore (by the help of God) endeavour to do according as I promised in my first book ; that is, to enlarge my use for exhortation.

1st. By shewing you how you shall attain unto the gift of prayer, and what means you may come to be furnished with matter of prayer, that are barren of matter.

2dly. I shall give you some directions concerning short ejaculatory prayer.

3dly. If you are dead and dull, I shall in the last place give you some directions, how you may get your hearts enlivened and quickened, and how you may come to be fervent and hearty in prayer, and so I shall conclude this subject.

Now in the first place, do as one of Christ's Disciples did, *John 11. 1.* who came to Christ and desired him to teach them to pray, even as *John* taught his disciples; so go you to God in the name of Christ, and desire him to teach you to pray: Say, *Lord teach me to pray.* Beg for God's holy spirit, that he would help you to pray, and assist you in prayer, and put words into your mouth; for it is the spirit that must help your infirmities, saith the apostle, *Rom. 8. 28.* *For we know not what to pray for as we ought: But the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with Groans that cannot be expressed.* And if you come with an earnest desire of the spirit's help, he will help and assist you. But this is not all; for there are other means that you must use, if you desire to attain unto the Gift of prayer.

First, you must labour to be well acquainted with yourselves; study well your hearts and

lives

ives, and study truly the word and will of God, and all the branches of the ten commandments, which you may do by the help of the *Assembly's Catechism*, or any other book which explains the ten commandments. Study also the meaning of the *Lord's Prayer*, and there you will find how short you come of sanctifying God's name, and doing of his will; and how far the kingdom of grace is from coming into your Souls, when as you experience the kingdom of sin and satan to reign there so much.

Secondly, for the furnishing you with matter for prayer. In the next place, study God and Christ, and labour to know him in his nature, attributes, and works; and especially labour to be acquainted with his dealings towards you; and then you will see what a holy and righteous law you break, what a God you have offended, even your maker, preserver and benefactor. Once more study well the truth and faithfulness of God, and then you will see what promises you have slighted, and what threatenings you have contemned, and these things will cause you to aggravate you sin in confessing of them; and besides, they will make you the more earnest, in begging pardon for them, and to study God's great goodness to you, and to think on the several kinds of his mercy, which he has bestowed upon you, both for your souls and bodies. As for instance, by what wonderful mercy your lives are preserved,

and you saved from all dangers, when as so many distempers, and such a multitude of Casualties and dangers. And to this end he renews his Mercy to you every morning, and every night, and every hour: he also by his good hand of providence, feeds you with the fruits of the earth, and gives it virtue to nourish you, and gives you an appetite to digest them: also he continues your ease, whilst many others are in pain and misery: also he continues the sight of your eyes, and the use of all your senses and members, and gives you sweet and comfortable rest, and comfortable habitation: and besides, the great mercy of all is, you being in a lost and undone estate and condition, he delivered up his dearly beloved son a sacrifice upon the cross, that by his sufferings and death, he might deliver us from hell and eternal wrath, and purchase Heaven and salvation for you; and upon this account, he hath given you the light of his holy word and gospel; he hath given you his sabbath and his ministers, and his holy spirit to teach and instruct you in the way to heaven and happiness. Now, if you will but study all these sorts of mercies, what abundance of matter, you will find for praise and thanksgiving! Study also what temptations you daily meet withal in the world; what snares, baits and allurements, you often meet with, prompting you up to pride, lustfulness, wantonness, covetousness, in

tempe-

temperance, malice, or revenge, and how apt you are to be overcome by those temptations; and then you will find matter enough to pray for power and strength against those temptations, that you be not overcome. Study also, that victory you have got over such and such a lust, and then you will find matter of praise and thanksgiving to God for giving you that Victory as the Apostle did, 1. Cor. 11. 17. Also you will find matter to bewail and lament over those sins and corruptions that you cannot yet find you have got any victory.

Thirdly, study well the fulness of Christ, and your own emptiness, and this will furnish you with matter of prayer. Consider, that in Christ there is fulness of grace, there is power to repent of sins past, there is strength against corruption, there is power enabling the sinner to lay hold of Christ by a saving faith: there is the Grace of divine love, of holy fear of patience, of Graces implanted in nature, but they are all purchased by the blood of Christ, and they are all hid in Christ, to be bestowed upon all such as earnestly desire them, and seek and labour by hearty fervent prayer for the obtaining of them, Col. 1. 9. *For it pleaseth the Father, that in him shall all fulness dwell.* So in John, 1. 16. *For of his fulness all have received grace for grace.* Friends, if you did but once come to see the fulness of Christ, and your own emptiness, you would never cease

cease crying unto him, until your souls are replenished with those saving graces which are purchased for lost sinners, and laid up in Christ. You know that a child, when he sees a pedler's pack opened, and seeing so many things, he will cry to his father, *father, give me this or that* : So would you cry to God, your heavenly father, for such and such saving graces, if you did but once come to see the riches of Christ, and your own wants and necessities.

Fourthly, Observe how the case goes with the church and people of *God*, and how the case goes with your neighbours and relations, and with the family in which you dwell, both in respect of their souls and this will furnish you with matter for prayer and intercession.

Fifthly, Join as oft as you can with praying persons, and of them you may learn to pray.

Sixthly and Lastly, For your help, get by heart some forms of prayer (out of a book) and make use of them, until by them you come to know your own sins and wants, and so can pray better without them. But I need not send you to a prayer-book to learn to pray ; do but study and consider well upon what I have wrote in this small book, and follow this rule; namely, study well your sins, corruptions, and temptations, your wants, and your daily mercies, and then you will be furnished with matter enough for Prayer.

Thus

Thus have I finished the first thing I promised, that is, to shew you how you shall attain unto gift of prayer; and to furnish you with matter, who are weak and barren of matter.

I shall be brief in the other two:

Secondly, I promised also to give you some directions concerning short ejaculatory prayer: and this is a sudden-lifting up of the heart to God in a short phrase, which may be done at any time, or any place or company, especially when you are alone, when you are at your work, or when you are a walking or travelling by the way, then you may often lift up your heart to God in some short prayer, and yet no hindrance to you in what you are about: and besides, you may meet with some casualties, or some temptations, or some motions, may come into your mind to move you to some short breathing forth of your soul to God: and as occasion serves, learn to plead with God, and plead his attributes thus:

First, when you chance to meet with any tempting or ensnaring object, that you are afraid of being caught in the devil's hook, then plead God's omniscieny thus:

O most Wise, Omnipotent, all-seeing and all-knowing God, from whom no secret thing can be hid, who makest all my steps, and understandest my thoughts afar off, I pray thee give me grace,
that

that I may see thee always before mine Eyes, and be mindful of my appearance at the bar of thy Justice, that I may not dare to venture upon that sin that I am now tempted to.

Secondly, If you find any sin or lust like to overcome you, then plead God's power and all sufficiency :

O Almighty Great and glorious Lord God whose strength is made perfect in weakesses, I pray thee, according to thy almighty power, strengthen me with thy grace, that I may, by thy help, be enabled to overcome this sin, this lust, this vanity.

Thirdly, If for want of taking heed, you chance to be overtaken, and fall into any kind of sin, then plead the mercy and goodness of God, and the merits of Christ, for your pardon thus :

O most merciful, gracious and loving father, in Christ, I humbly entreat thee, for his bitter death and bloody passion's sake, that thou wouldst pardon and forgive me this sin, and give me grace to rise again by true repentance, and be more watchful over my heart and life for the time to come.

Whensoever you think upon your natural pollutions and defilements, then plead the holiness of God thus :

O most holy, holy, holy Lord God of sabbath, who are of purer eyes than to behold iniquity ; I pray thee wash away my sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.

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Christ. Sanctify my name ; purify my conscience from dead works.

But to be short, if you are under any doubts or fears, or under any kind of affliction, then plead the wisdom of God, that he might work all things about for your good.

Also, when you are going to read, or hear the word of God, then plead God's truth and faithfulness, that, for his truth's sake, he would give you grace to hearken to his counsels, obey his precepts, embrace his promises, and stand in awe of his threatnings.

Lastly. Once more, when you are a going about the set duty of prayer, and finding yourself to be dull, and unfit for that duty, then plead the quickening spirit of God, thus :

O infinite, eternal and everlasting God who are life itself and givest life and being to all creatures : and by the virtue of Christ's resurrection, will one day raise the dead out of their graves : I beseech thee also, by the same virtue, that thou would'st quicken my dead and dull spirit : suffer me not to bring a dead and dull spirit : suffer me not to bring a dead sacrifice before a living God ; but take from me deadness, dulness, and drowsiness, or what so hinders or indisposeth me to duty. Quicken me, I pray thee, to duty, and quicken me in duty ; inspire in me, I beseech thee, a new spiritual life ; and this I beg for Christ's sake.

Thus

Thus I have endeavour'd as plain as I could to put words into your mouths, and teach you how to pray, both by a set duty, and by short ejaculations. To conclude all, when you are going to pray, labour to stir up your souls into a lively and serious belief of the unseen things of another world: And pray, as if you saw them before your eyes, as if you saw God in his glory, as if you saw heaven and hell, the glorified and the damned, Christ in heaven interceding for you. Such a believing sight as this will make you serious, and pray to purpose with all your hearts. Thus by following of these rules, you will, by God's help, obtain fervency in prayer.

Now consider these things, and the Lord give you understanding.

The End of the second SERMON.

T H E

T H E
Accepted Time :
A N D
Day of S A L V A T I O N .

2 Cor. vi. part of Verse 2.

— *Behold, now is the Accepted Time ; Be-
hold now is the Day of Salvation.*

THE occasion of these words may be taken from the words immediately before the text, which are the Lord's own words, spoken by the mouth of the prophet *Isaiah* 49. 8. saying, *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation I helped thee:* Or, as it is in the words before the text, *In a day of salvation have I succour'd thee.* And from thence the apostle takes occasion to shew us when that [accepted time, and day of salvation is, wherein God hears us and accepts us; and that he doth hear, in the words of my text, *Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

From these words I shall gather this general observation :

That the only time to make our peace with God, and thereby to obtain mercy and salvation is now, this present season of grace; on the time present is the only acceptable time : for,

Behold

Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of our salvation.

The text affords us these two general parts.

First. Here is a double note of attention. *Behold ! Behold !*

Secondly, Here is the subject matter to behold, that is, *Now is the accepted time ; and Now is the day of salvation.*

First, Here is a double note of attention. *behold ! behold !* Now to behold a thing, is to take great notice of it, and to observe it, and to mind it ; and we may be sure, that whenever we are called upon to behold a thing, it must be something of very great concernment. There are many things are not worth beholding ; for if you mind it, you may find it in the scriptures, that when any thing mentioned that is of greater concernment than others 'tis always brought in with this note, *Behold*. As *James 3. 12. Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.* A matter of great concernment. So *John 1. 22. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world* and many others. Now there cannot be a matter of greater concern than this is my text, that *now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.* A thing which concerns our winning or losing of heaven for ever ; a thing which concerns our everlasting peace, or our everlasting woe ; that now is the time, that we in earnest seek for mercy, we may have it

now is the time, and if we seek and desire grace, pardon and salvation, we shall be accepted; but afterwards all our praying, crying, and intreating, will be in vain. Now what can be more worth our beholding than this? This is a matter which concerns ourselves, and it is of the greatest concernment in the world; therefore this requires a double note of attention, and to put us in mind of it: *Behold! behold!*

And so I pass, *secondly*, from the note *behold*, to the second general matter. Subject matter to *behold*; and that also is double: *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* Now, tho' the accepted time, and the day of salvation are two words, yet in sense they are one and the same: For the *accepted time* is our day of salvation, and our *day of salvation* is the accepted time. Wherein, if we unfeignedly seek the Lord, and turn to him by true repentance, we shall be sure to be accepted, pardoned, and saved: For, *Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.*

Now in the further prosecution of this subject, I shall proceed after this manner.

First. I shall shew you, that with us there is such a time as an *accepted time, and day of salvation.*

Secondly, I shall shew you the season when this *accepted time, and day of salvation* is.

Thirdly,

Thirdly. The reason of it. And,
Lastly, The application.

I shall begin with the first, and shew you that with us there is such a *time and day of salvation*. And *first*, in respect of the fallen angels who never had such a season of time allotted them: Alas! they committed but one sin against God, and that but only in thought, and yet for that one sin they were thrust out of heaven, and reserved unto chains of darkness unto the dreadful day of judgment: They being once fallen, had never a day of salvation offered them, they never had one moment of time allotted them, upon the improvement of which they might have been reserved to mercy. Therefore, if they should pray and cry and entreat the Lord never so earnestly, that he would forgive them that one sin, and restore them once more to mercy, yet they should never be regarded. Christ suffered not for them, there was not one drop of blood shed to wash away their sins: *For he took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham* Heb, 6. 16.

Secondly, There is with us such a time as an accepted time, and day of salvation, in opposition to those damned souls that are now in hell. 'Tis true, the devils being once fallen, never had mercy offered them, they never had one minute of time afforded them to work out their own salvation, whereasthese damned wretches

once had mercy offered them, but they despised it; they once had a day of salvation, a time wherein they might have been accepted: alas! they'd many a call from God, time after time, many a secret motion from his spirit; they once heard many a sermon, and enjoyed many a sabbath, God waited upon them time after time, year after year, whilst they continued in their rebellion against him: But, alas! alas! they sinned away all their precious opportunities: All this time they might have been accepted, if they had turned to God in earnest: But, lo! now the day of grace is concluded, the door of hope is forever shut against them; now they are left in a more miserable condition than the fallen angels are in; for they once had a season of grace put into their hands, but they willfully lost it, and trifled it away; long did God wait and call upon them from one time to another, and shed his spirit, and by his messengers; but they hardened their hearts, wearied out his patience, grieved his spirit, despised his messengers, abused his goodness: alas! the devil will never have such confidence in them as these damned souls now have.

Thirdly, There is such a time as an *accepted time, and day of salvation*, in opposition to that shall be with us hereafter: If we let it slip when we come to hell, we shall be in the same miserable condition that those damned souls

souls are in, that are already there. Consider, that men being created in a holy and righteous estate, and we being fallen, if God had not found a way for our recovery, we had been left in a miserable condition, as the lost angels were. But God, of his unspeakable mercy, looked in tender love upon lost mankind, that he gave his dearly beloved son to suffer and die for us; and for his sake, he hath afforded every one of us a day of grace, which if we duly improve in turning to God, in receiving of this his son, as he offered, we shall be accepted, pardoned and saved; but if we squander away this precious season, in following vanity and foolery, in satisfying our lusts, and pleasing ourselves until the door of mercy be shut, our damnation will be far more great, than if we never had such an opportunity but into our hands. That's the first; there is with us such a time as an *accepted time, and day of salvation*.

Secondly. I shall next shew, when this *accepted time, and Day of salvation* is; that is, it is now: Now is the *accepted time*, and now is the *Day of salvation*. The apostle doth not speak it in the future-tense, that soon after will be an *accepted time*: Tho' you continue in your sins for a while, in rebelling against God, grieving his spirit and provoking him to wrath, yet, if you turn to God hereafter, you shall be accepted; no, but he speaks in the present-tense,

sider, *Behold now is the accepted time*: All man-
 kind are in a miserable state by nature; and
 it is now that the terms of mercy are offered
 you, and an opportunity of grace put into your
 hand: mark what our saviour saith, *Mat. 21.*
26. Agree with thine Adversary quickly, whilst
thou art in the way with him; least at any time
the adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the
Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be cast
into prison: verily, I say, unto thee, thou shalt
not come out thence till thou hast paid the utmost
Farthing. Now God is your adversary, for we
 are all by nature enemies to God by reason of
 sin; but yet God, of his tender love, hath gi-
 ven us terms of reconciliation; agree therefore
 with him quickly, before his Justice hath seized
 upon thee, and thou be delivered to the offi-
 cer, the devil, and then thou shalt by him be
 cast into prison of hell, and there thou must
 be in extream and intolerable torments, until
 thou hast paid the utmost farthing of God's
 justice, which can never be to all eternity. Oh!
 therefore agree, and make your peace with
 your God quickly, whilst thou art in the way
 with him; for now you are in the fair way
 with him to be reconciled, for he offers you
 terms of mercy, he hath shewed you in his
 word by what means you may come to make
 an agreement with him, *2 Cor. 20.* And if
 God so earnestly desires our reconciliation with
 him, in what a fair way are we then with (God
 to

to be reconciled. But continued in your unconverted estate, and in your enmity with God a little longer, until the season of grace be at an end, and God hath shut against you the door of mercy, then God and you will be irreconcilable for ever; then all your Prayers and tears, and endeavours, shall never be accepted; then nothing remains, but to the prison of hell and must be cast, there to remain for ever and ever. Therefore, as *Eliphas* said to *Job*. so say I do you, *Job*. 22. 21. *Acquaint now thy self with him, and be at peace, thereby God shall come unto thee*, For behold, now is the time that thou mayest be accepted. But more particular, to shew you when this *accepted time and day of salvation* is, it is now in this life; for there is no making our peace with God after death. Therefore saith *Solomon*, *Eccles*. 9. 60. *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest*.

Now, through God's grace, you may be converted; if yet you are enemies to God, you may be reconciled; if yet you are in your sins, you may be pardoned, if yet you are in the estate of damnation, you may be brought into an estate of salvation: but when once death hath shut your eyes, then your condition will be unalterable for ever: *I must work the work of him that sent me, whilst it is to day; for the night cometh when no man can work*.

But, yet, though the time of this life be the *accepted time, and day of Salvation*; yet every time of a man's life may not be an *accepted time* with him; for with some the *day of Salvation* lasteth all their life long, and with some it doth not; therefore well might the prophet cry out. Isa. 55. 6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call on him whilst he is near*; for there may come a time, that the Lord will not be found, tho' he be sought never so diligently Heb. 27. I shall therefore shew you some certain seasons of man's life, which if we have but wisdom to know them, and grace to improve them, I shall but little more than name them.

First, The time of Youth is the *Accepted Time*. Remember thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth says Solomon. Eccles. 12. 1.

Secondly. The time of health and strength is the *accepted time*. In the old law, that which was offered up in sacrifice, which was torn, blind, or lame, was not accepted: this shews, that those who spend the best of their days and strength in the work of the devil, and then think to give themselves up to God, when sickness, lameness and feeble old age comes, must never look to be accepted, God will not be put off with the devil's leavings.

Thirdly, the time of the gospel is the *accepted time*. Praying-opportunities, sermon opportunities, sabbath-opportunities, sacrament-

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opportunities, these are seasons of salvation, for we know not how soon God may remove our candlestick out of this place, and take from us the means of grace; and then the opportunities of grace will be at an end.

Fourthly and Lastly, the time of God's spirit's working and striving in the heart of wicked men, is the accepted time, and they that obey the calls of God's spirit when he strives shall be sure to be accepted, let it be at what time soever, whether it be in youth or old age. God's spirit is compar'd to *Noah's Dove*, which *Noah* sent out of the Ark, and it returned to him again and again: But when he sent the Dove out the third time, it never returned to him more. So the spirit of God hath its goings and comings; it comes at one time into the heart of a sinner, and secretly calls upon him to repent, and become a new creature, But if the sinner may be, stifles these good motions, quenches the spirit, and continues still in his sinful course of life; then it may be, the spirit departs, and then comes again and again, and at last, the spirit being often resisted, and grieved, he is provoked finally to depart, and never to trouble him more; and then grace departed, and he is immediately delivered up to a hard heart and a reprobate mind, that shall never repent. And when once he is brought to that pass, then all the sermons, and all the prayers in the world will never do him any good.

good. Oh! therefore have a care of quenching and grieving the holy Spirit of God, when it secretly stirs and works in your hearts; but be careful to obey its motions, lest the spirit being grieved, withdraw itself finally, and never return more, and then your *Accepted time and Day of Salvation* will have an end. Now with us there is such a time as an *Accepted time, and day of Salvation*. And that for these two reasons, I shall but just name them:

First, That thereby the saints might have occasion for ever to magnifie the free grace of God, that he hath not left them to perish in their miserable estate, but hath offered them terms of mercy, and hath put an opportunity of Salvation into their hands, and hath given them Grace to improve it.

Secondly, That thereby thy wickedness may be left without excuse, for there is never a damn'd soul in hell that can plead this, that they never had a day of grace. O it would be a great lessening of their torments if they could plead so. Alas! there was never a man or woman, since the creation of the world, but hath had a season of grace, there was never none yet ever lived, be their lives, short or long, but before they die, they have mercy offered them, and an accepted time to seek it in. Therefore the wicked shall be left without excuse: Nay, 'twill add much to their torments to consider, that they once had a season of Grace

and Salvation, and yet wilfully lost it. O let every one therefore, both small and great, behold and consider, *That now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.*

The APPLICATION.

THE first use that I shall make of this, shall be a use of terror to all such as squander and trifle away the precious season of grace and salvation. Friends, you have heard, that God's spirit will not always trifle with men: God is not bound to wait all a man's life long. If God continues waiting from one Time to another, from one Year to another, from one sabbath to another, and yet you turn a deaf ear to his calls, and slight his warnings, and will go on resolutely and presumptuously in your sins, consider, God will at last be weary of waiting, his waiting will be tired out; and then just as you have served God in your duty and grace, so God will serve you, when his day of wrath and vengeance comes: O read and tremble, in that dreadful Place of scripture, *Prov. 1. 23. to the End: Mark there how lovingly God exhortates wicked men, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love iniquity? and ye scorers delight in scorning? and ye fools hate knowledge?* And then see his loving call and invitation. *Ver. 23. Turn at my reproof:* And also his gracious promise, *Behold I will pour out my spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you.* But yet all this loving exhortation, invitation and promise would prevail nothing to them, they would run on in their evil courses for all that; therefore see what God saith to them now, *Ver. 24. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsells, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your Calamity, and will mock when your fear cometh, when fear cometh as a whirlwind, when destruction and anguish cometh upon them; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; then shall they seek me early, but they shall not find.*

O let me ; they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. A most dreadful text this is, if it be rightly considered ; in the day of their visitation, God called upon them to turn from their evil ways, and then they turned a deaf ear, and would not regard ; but afterwards, when their Day of *Israel* was past, and the day of their extremity was come, when they called upon God for mercy, and God would not regard them. It is a common proverb among us,

He that will not whilst he may,

When he would, he shall have nay.

This was the very case of *Ester* ; he was a hunting, and following his fleshly delights, when God was a calling him to repentance ; and then afterwards, when he would have repented, he was rejected ; for he found no place for repentance, tho' he besought it carefully with tears, *Heb. 12. 27.* Now God may call upon you wicked men to turn and be saved, both by his Word and by his spirit, but they will not regard ; but when this their day of salvation is ended, and they come to lye upon their death-bed, O how they will then cry out, *Lord, pardon me ! Lord, save me ! Mercy, Lord ! some mercy for Christ's sake !* But God may justly answer them : No sinner, no mercy to be had. I once offered thee mercy, but thou abusedst it ; and seeing thou wouldst not accept of mercy whilst it is offered thee, therefore now the door of mercy is shut against thee for ever.

2. My second use shall be for matter of encouragement to such who are willing to come in and accept of the terms of mercy, but yet keep off through doubt and fears.

O, says one, I am afraid my day of salvation is past already ; and if so, all my endeavours will be in vain ; I shall never be accepted.

Ans. To answer this, I will give you this one mark, whereby you may know whether your day of salvation be past or no. You say that your day of salvation is past ; If so, this is a good sign that it is not past ; for those with whom their day of grace is past, they grow senseless of any such matter. Again, don't you find sometimes godly motions stirring in you by the spirit ? Don't you find in

you sometimes a sorrow for sin after it is committed, and a desire to have sin? Don't your heart sometimes melt when you hear the word preach'd? Have you not some desire to become a new creature? If so, when your day of salvation is not yet past? for those with whom the day of grace is past; they are given over to a senseless, hard, and obdurate heart, that is neither moved with mercies, nor terrified with judgments; and being given over to themselves, they run into all kind of wickedness with greediness; and, as it seems, this is not thy case, as yet; so now, up, and close with the terms of mercy, whilst thy day of salvation is lengthened out.

O but, says another, it may be, I am none of God's elect; and if so, then all my endeavours will be to no purpose.

Ans. Whether a man be elected or not, that is not in his power to know, and therefore he ought not to meddle with it; but you must understand, that God decrees aright for those whom he hath elected, he hath absolutely decreed, that they shall be justified, sanctified, and saved; but those whom God hath reprobated, he hath not absolutely decreed that they shall be damned, but he hath left them to their own choice, as *Adam* and *Eve* was, and therefore their damnation is wilful of themselves; but whether you are elected or not, if I may so speak, if you repent, and be converted, you shall be saved; if not, you shall be damned. As many as do perish, do not perish, because they were not elected, but because they would not use the means in order to their salvation.

O but (you will say) it may be, God will not give me grace to repent, and without his grace I can do nothing.

Ans. Know, for your encouragement, that both you and every one else enjoys a day of salvation; and this day of salvation is time of assistance, as well as time of acceptance. Mark the promise of Christ, *Mat. 7. 7. Ask and ye shall have, seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:* For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Mark, Christ speaketh there nothing concerning election; but every one, whoever he be, that asketh, seeketh and knocketh for grace, pardon and mercy, and that in season, whilst it may be had, shall certainly be heard and accepted: But then you must be sure to seek in season; for seeking out of season never yet found success. Now if *Esau* had but sought repentance in earnest, when God called him to repent, then God would have strengthened and assisted him, and also accepted him; but he sought for repentance when the season of repentance was gone, and that ruined him for ever. Now mark this, whatever the degrees of heaven be concerning you, yet if you are but willing to leave your sins, and do heartily desire grace and mercy, and earnestly seek it by prayer and supplication, and that in the season so grace, whilst it is offered you; then tho' you can do nothing of yourselves, yet you shall have strength and assistance enough; for God will help you, Christ will help you, and the spirit will help you; you shall have help from heaven; and, through the spirit of Christ's strengthening, you shall be enabled to go through with this great work; and then you shall not only be assisted, but also accepted and rewarded: But then you must be sure to seek in season, in your day of salvation: for if you seek out of season, all your seeking and striving will be in vain.

Lastly, To conclude all with a word or two of exhortation. Be exhorted, as you desire the salvation of your souls, to consider and improve this precious season of grace and salvation, in working out your salvation before it be too late: O, It is most dreadful to consider, that God hath allotted us but one small portion of time to do all that ever must be done for eternity, and yet it should be squandered away in vanity and foolery. But, friends, whatever you see others do, do you in earnest lay hold on this your day of salvation before it is gone. Seek ye the Lord now whilst he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near. And whilst other spend their time in feasting and rioting, and in the pleasures of the flesh, do

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The Accepted Time,

you spend your time in fasting, praying, repenting, and suing out the pardon of your sins, and making your peace with God. And if you do thus, then at last, when time, shall cease and be no longer, you shall hear that blessed welcome pronounced from the mouth of Christ, Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Which the Lord of his infinite mercy grant unto us all. *Amen.*

The End of the Third S E R M O N.



T H E

THE End of TIME:

A N D Beginning of ETERNITY.

Rev. x. Ver. 5, and Part of Ver. 6.

*And the Angel which I saw stand upon the Earth
and upon the Sea, lift up his Hand towards
Heaven.*

*And swear by him that liveth for ever and ever,
&c. That there shall be Time no longer.*

Beloved friends and neighbours, I desire
you all to take this small treatise into
your hands, and diligently read it over and
over again; and when you have done, enter
upon a serious consideration upon those mat-
ters which are contained in this book, and lay
them close to your hearts, and I hope it will
be a means to stir you up in time, to lay hold
on this your golden season of grace, before it
be at an end.

In my last treatise, concerning the *accepted
time and day of salvation*, I was forced to leave
out many things that are of very great weight
and concernment, because they could not be all
contained in so small a discourse: and it is great
pity that such weighty matters should be lost;
and therefore upon farther consideration of it, I
have here entered upon another subject, which

is concerning *the end of time, and the beginning of Eternity*: wherein I do promise thro' God's assistance, to lay down those weighty concerns which I was forced to leave out in my other treatise of *the accepted time, and day of Salvation*: And I hope thro' God's grace, it will be the winning many souls, and bring them home to God, who now squander and trifle away their time in meer vanity; and that I shall do from these words of the Angel, who swearing with a loud voice, *by him that liveth for ever and ever, That there should be time no longer.*

Now from this place of scripture I might lay down these particulars:

I. The description of the person that thus swears, *It was a great and mighty angel came down from Heaven*, ver. 1.

II. What it was he held in his hand: It was a little book open.

III. His gesture: he stood.

IV. His manner of standing: It was with one foot upon the earth, and the other upon the Sea.

V. The loudness of his voice: it was as loud as when a Lion roareth.

VI. As he spake: He lift up his hands towards Heaven.

VII. He spake with an oath: he swear.

VIII. The person by whom he swears, that is, *by him that liveth for ever and ever.*

IX. And *Lastly*, the matter of his Oath, or

the words which he uttered; that is, *that there shall be time no longer.*

But I will pass them all by, and insist only upon the last, which are the words that this great and mighty angel uttered, and confirmed by an Oath, and swear by no less than the great and glorious God, *by him that liveth for ever and ever.* And spoke them with an exceeding loud voice, the words are these, *that there shall be time no longer.*

The doctrine that I shall raise from hence, is this, that at the end of this world, at the great and dreadful day of judgment, time and opportunity shall cease, and be no longer.

From hence I shall lay down these three or four things considerable :

1. What time shall be no longer.
2. When time shall be no longer.
3. The reason why time should be no longer.

And then, *Lastly*, the application.

In the first place, I shall shew you what time shall be no longer, and in doing of this, I shall answer an objection which lies in my way that is, how can that be ; some may say, that at the last day, time shall cease, and be no longer. Whereas it is said, that then nothing shall remain but time, and that time shall wait upon eternity. When all things in the world shall have an end, yet time shall remain still. Time runs parallel with the life of God ;

God ; it never had beginning, and never shall have end : time and eternity are linked together ; so that we cannot speak of the one, but we must speak of the other : time was before all millions of years that can be thought, and it shall remain throughout all ages to come, even to all eternity.

Now to answer this : when the angel swears that time shall be no longer, he doth not mean time considered in itself ; for that shall remain as long as eternity endures, and shall never have an end ; and for time to have an end is a thing impossible. But to take the words in their true sense and meaning, it is an opportunity of time, which at the last day shall cease and be no longer.

I shall name some of those opportunities of time, which at the end of the world shall end, and be no longer.

I. The time of nature shall be no longer ; it was the promise of God to man after the flood, *Gen. 8. 22. That as long as the earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, Cold and Heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.* But at the end of the world, when the earth, and all things temporal, shall be dissolved, when all these shall cease, and be no longer, *to every thing, saith Solomon, there is a season and a time, to every purpose under the Sun, Eccles. 3. 1. 2. 3. &c. a time to be born, and a time to die ; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted, &c.* But

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But at the end of the world all these seasons and opportunities shall end, and be no longer ; then there shall be no more opportunities of planting and gathering ; no more sowing, no reaping, no more opportunities of buying and selling ; all these opportunities of nature shall then cease, and be no longer.

II. The time of our abode here upon earth, shall be no longer, at the end of the world heaven and hell shall contain the whole world of men and women, either in heaven or hell we must abide for ever, but here we shall be no more.

David prays that God would spare him, that he may recover his strength before he goes hence, and be no more. Psal. 35. 13. That is, be no more in a mortal estate in this world. And *Job* 7, 9, 20. *As the clouds consumeth and vanish away, so he that goeth down to the grave, shall come up no more ; he shall return no more to his House.* That is, his habitation in this world, and his place here upon earth shall know him no more. So also *Job*. 14, 14. *If a man die, he shall live again.* That is, he shall live again in another world, either in everlasting joys, or in everlasting torments, but he shall never live again in this world.

III. The time of the tribulations, sorrows, and afflictions of God's children shall be no longer: now they are persecuted by wicked men, now they are slighted, mocked at, scorned, and abused ;

abused ; now they have many a temptation to strive against, now the devil torments them with many doubts and fears that their sins shall never be pardon'd, that God will never be favourable unto them : Alas ! they are fain to endure many sorrows and calamities both outwardly in their bodies and inwardly in their souls. But at the end of time there shall also be an end of all their Sorrows : *Thou God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain ; for the former things are past away, Rev. 21. 4.* Then they shall never more be persecuted by wicked men, they shall never more be subject to any sickness or distempers, or any kind of miseries ; then there shall be no more complaining by reason of their outward miseries, nor yet by reason of their inward trouble ; saying, can these sins be pardoned ; is there any mercy for such a wretch as I am ; will God ever shew me any favour ; no, there shall be none of those complaints heard in heaven : for when time shall be no longer, then all the sorrows, miseries and afflictions of the children of God shall also cease, and be no longer.

IV. The time of the prosperity and sinful pleasure of wicked men shall be no longer : now wicked men live many a merry hour, they run to many a merry meeting ; how they can laugh and sing, and riot, and play away their
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precious time ; now they feast, and drink, and game, as if they were to live for ever ; but when time shall end, and be no longer, then they shall be an end of their mirth and jollity, Look in Rev. 18. and read the chapter throughout, and there you shall see a dreadful sentence pronounced against the whore of Babylon : *She exceeded in Riches, she was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with Gold, and precious stones, and pearls ; and she was full of her abominations and filthiness of her fornications.* Chap. 17. 8. She lived in all kind of pleasure, but here is a dreadful woe pronounced against her, Chap. 18. 7. *Look how much he hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously ; so much torment and sorrow give her ; for she said in her heart, I set as Queen, and know no Sorrow.* Therefore shall her plagues come in one day ; death and mourning, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire ; for strong is the Lord God who judged her. And after that, Chap. 18. 22, 23. *A mighty Angel took up a stone like unto a great mill-stone, and cast it into the Sea, saying that with violence shall that great City Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the Voice of harpers and musicians, and of pipers and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee ; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee ; and the sound of a mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee. And the light of a Candle shall shine*

shine no more at all in thee, and the Voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee. This is the very case of all wicked men, they have their pleasure and delights upon earth. *Go ye now, ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you,* saith St. James, Chap. 5. 1. 5. *Ye that have lived in pleasure, and have been wanton, you have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.* But when time shall be no longer, then there shall be an end of all their mirth and jollity; then there shall be no more singing and rejoycing, no more feasting and drinking; no more playing and gaming, no more musick nor dancing; all these pleasures and fleshly delights shall then have an end, and be no longer.

V. The time of the gospel shall be no longer; now we enjoy many a praying opportunity, many a sermon-opportunity, many a sabbath-opportunity, many a sacrament-opportunity, but at the end of time all those opportunities shall be enjoyed no more; then there shall be no more preaching nor praying; no more sabbaths, nor sacraments; no more gospel-opportunities, and enjoyments; no more promises of pardon and mercy to sinners; no more offers of Christ and salvation; and these gospel-opportunities shall then cease and be no longer.

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Sixthly and lastly, The time of God's patience and forbearance shall be no longer; God hath resolved that his spirit shall not always strive with man: Anſi ſaith God to his people *Israel*, Rom. 10. 12. *All the day long have I stretched out my Hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.* Now God ſtands day after day, ſabbath after ſabbath, year after year, proffering mercy to rebellious finners; now God waits long upon finners, even all the day long; that is, all the time of their viſitation, all the time their day and ſeaſon of grace laſteth, whiſt finners are a wearying of his patience, and grieving of his ſpirit: Now God calls and calls aloud, both by mercy and judgment, both by his word and by his ſpirit, by loving expoſtulations and earneſt entreaties to finners to turn and be ſaved, ſay, *Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die? Why will ye not be made clean? O when ſhall it once be!* Now he entreats you to come and be reconciled to him, now he offers you grace and mercy, and entreats you to accept it.

But at laſt, when the day of grace ſhall be ſpent, and time at an end; then Chriſt's grace and mercy will be offered to finners no more; then God's patience and forbearance will be at an end, then his ſpirit will no more ſtrive with men; then they ſhall have no more call from God, to turn and be ſaved; no more tenders of Chriſt and ſalvation, no more proof

proffers of grace and mercy, for then shall be an end of God's patience and forbearance of his calls and invitations, at the end of the world, all these opportunities of time cease and be no longer.

And thus for the first particular, *What time shall be no longer*, it is not time considered in itself, but the opportunities of time that shall cease and be no longer.

II. My second particular is to shew you when time shall be no longer, that is at the end of the world; at the great and dreadful day of judgment, when the whole frame of nature shall be dissolved, when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and when the power of heaven shall be shaken, and when Christ shall come in the clouds, with power and great glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; it is then the angels *swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer*. But as for every particular man, when once his season of grace is ended, and when he comes to die, and to take his flight from time to eternity, then with him time shall be no longer.

III. The third thing considerable, are the reasons why time shall be no longer. Now there might be many reasons added, but I will reduce them all into these three heads.

1. Time shall at last cease and be no longer, that there may be a total end of that which is the worst of evils, which is sin. It is sin that grieves God's spirit, wearies his patience, and crucifies afresh continually the son of God, and puts him often to open shame. Therefore God will at last put an end to time, that he may at last ease himself of these great evils : God complains of wicked men, that he is pressed with their wicked ways, even as a cart is pressed with sheaves. But *Ab*, saith the Lord, *I will ease me of my adversaries*, Isa. 1. 24. God will at last put an end to time, that he might ease himself of his burthen ; nay, the very saints themselves, they with *Lot* are often vexed and grieved with the filthy communication of the wicked : Therefore they earnestly pray that God would hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there might be an end to these sinful days.

2. Time shall at last cease and be no longer, for the sake of God's elect, and for the fulfilling of those promises which God hath made to them. Mark what our blessed saviour saith to this purpose, *Matt. 24. 22. Except those days shall be shortned no flesh shall be saved ; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortned*. Now there be many that do misinterpret Christ's words in this place : For, say they, the world was at first to last six thousand years, two thousand before the law, two thousand

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stand under the law, and two thousand under the gospel. And from those words of our saviour Christ, *That for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.* They say that much of their two thousand years under Christ shall be cut off, and so the time shortned; but who can tell this, that so long a time the world was to endure, and much of that time should be shortned? The scripture reveals no such thing, the world may last six thousand years, the last day may come at the end of six thousand years, or it may come sooner; that none can tell, it may be nearer than we are aware of: *For of that day and of that hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels in heaven, nor the son, but the father only,* ver. 19. But you are to understand the meaning of our Saviour's words, here thus: *Except those days shall be shortned;* that is, except there comes an end of those days, *no flesh shall be saved but for the elect's sake;* there shall come an end, for if those days are not shortned, there would never be an end, but the world would continue for ever: And if there should never be an end, then there would never be a day of judgment, and if there never be a day of judgment, then there would never be a resurrection; and if there never be a resurrection, then the bodies of the elect should for ever lie rotten in their graves, and then indeed no flesh can be saved: Indeed, at their death their

spirits

spirits are saved; but except those days shall be shortned, or except there come an end of time, no flesh shall be saved. Therefore, for the elect's sake there shall be an end of time, wherein their bodies shall be raised out of their graves, and they shall then receive the fulness of their reward, which God hath promised, and laid up for them in heaven.

Thirdly and lastly, Time shall at last cease and be no longer, that there might be an accomplishment of God's threatnings to wicked men: For God hath foretold, *That he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,* Eccles. 12. 14. But if there never comes an end of time, then wicked men shall never be brought to a reckoning for all their evil deeds, and consequently they shall never come to their full punishment. Therefore it is necessary, that there should at last be an end of these opportunities and reasons of grace, that there might come a time wherein all mankind might receive their full reward, or their full punishment, according as they have spent their time here in this world. God will not always suffer the wicked to prosper, he will not always let them alone to blaspheme his name, to persecute his saints, to prophane his ordinances, to grieve his spirit, to abuse his good-

goodness; tho' God bears with them for a while, yet he will not always bear with them, nor yet will he always suffer his dearest children to be persecuted and afflicted, to live in sorrow and misery; and therefore God will certainly put an end to time, that he might put an end to the sinful pleasures of the wicked, and the sorrows of his children; and punish the one in everlasting torments in hell, and reward the other with everlasting joys of heaven. That they also that will not accept of mercy in time, whilst it is offered, when God called upon them, and entreated them to accept it, that they might at last, when time shall be no longer, and when the season of mercy shall be past, be forced too late to cry for mercy, when God will not regard them.

Now for these and the like reasons, time at last shall cease and be no longer; therefore, *the angel swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there shall be time no longer.*

The APPLICATION

I Shall now go on by way of application, and there are several uses that I shall raise from thence: As,

I. My first use shall be a use of instruction: It is so, that at the end of the world, time shall be no longer: Then from hence we may learn, that when time is at an end, eternity

will

will certainly begin, both eternity of happiness to the saints, and eternity of torments to the wicked. When once those opportunities of time is at an end, then will follow an infinite duration of time, that shall never have an end. Oh! how this will encrease the joys of the saints, when they are entered into their joyful place above, to think what a vast ocean of time it is before 'em, what infinite million of millions of years they have to possess their joys in and after ten thousand million of years is, yet still their joys is but beginning, and are as fresh to them as they were at their entrance into them: And, Oh! what a hell of hells this will be to the damned, when they come into this place of torments, to think what a vast ocean of time is before them, to endure these their torments in, what an infinite million of millions of Years they have to lie burning in these hellish flames; and yet after ten hundred thousand, thousand million of years, they shall be no nearer to an end; no, not one minute, nor one moment nearer to an end, than they were the first day they entered into them: Nay, they shall be so far from ending, that they will be ever but beginning: And, Oh! what a hell of hells this will be to the damned, to think upon this! Oh! eternity, eternity! Oh! vast eternity! what heart can conceive, what tongue can express the duration of it! If we count as many millions of years

years as there are stars in the sky ; and then as many millions of years as there are piles of grass, and grains of corn that is growing, and has grown since the creation of the world ; and then add to them as many millions of years as there has been living creatures of all sorts, from the beginning of the world, and shall be to the end ; and likewise add to them the number of the dust of the earth, and the sands of the sea shore : Now to one's thinking, all these millions of millions of years will never be run out ; but yet in time they will be spent and run out ; yet for all that, we are not come to an end, no, nor to the beginning of eternity : Eternity is an infinite durative, that shall never, never have an end.

II. My second use shall be a use of reproof. It is so, that at the end of time this golden opportunity of grace will be at an end ; and time shall cease and be no longer ; and after this small scantling of time, here follows an eternity, either of joy or torments ? Then what shall we think of those that squander away those golden opportunities, in doing that which is worse than nothing ! All the time that God is offering them Christ, Grace and mercy, and calling upon them to repent, and accept of mercy offered, all that time they waste in following their lust, grieviug his spirit, despising his mercy, and abusing his goodness.

A great many among the poor sort, spend a great part of their precious time in drudging in the world, in raking gains, and in labouring to get a little of this world's good; and it may be, as soon as they have got a little together, they die and leave it behind them: They can rise early and work, and eat, and drink, and sleep; and that is all that they can mind; they don't consider that they have an immortal soul to look after; that they have an eternity to provide for; they can spare no time for these things that are of greatest concernment. Again, others there are, that have more time than the poor sort; yet, oh! how dreadful it is to consider, how their time is squandered and wasted away! Some spend much of their precious time at cards and dice; others in feasting and drinking, rioting and gaming: Some Ladies there are that waste much of their precious time and day of salvation in dressing and decking themselves up in gaudy attire, in pride and wantonness. And thus all the time that God is calling, wooing, and beseeching people both by his word and spirit, to repent and turn, and accept of Christ and mercy, he offers them better, sweeter, and more durable pleasures than these earthly delights, if they will but hearken to his calls and return: Nay, that which is saddest of all to consider, is, that the Lord's day, which is the most precious season in all

the Week, which is a day to be kept holy to the Lord, in which we are not to think our own thoughts nor speak our own words; but we should spend the whole Day in the worship of God, in reading and praying, and godly conference, in doing and preparing ourselves for eternity.

On that day especially, above all other seasons, God calls, and earnestly intreats sinners (both by his word and spirit) to come in, and close with the offers of mercy, and proffers to help them, if they will but turn: And yet, tho' that day above all others, is the most golden opportunity of grace, yet a great many do squander and waste it away after a sad rate; they perhaps go to church, and lend their ears a while to the Word, and then as soon as they come out of the Church, they are discoursing about their worldly Affairs: Nay, in many great families they waste their precious time in a most sad manner: It would grieve any godly and devout christian to behold how the Lord's day (as well as other seasons) are wasted by many of them. They indeed join together in going to church to hear the word preached, and so far they do well enough; but then afterwards, when they do come home, there is scarce any thing ever heard from them concerning the Sermon they heard, or concerning the matters of their souls, but the evening of the Lord's day, as well as other

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other times filled up, a great part of it, with their vain and unsavory Discourse in laughing and jesting, in telling of stories, and of what news they have heard that day. Oh! friends, what a happy thing it would be, if you would but on the Lord's day, and now and then at other times, when you are together, enter into such serious discourse as this, and strive by your wining talk to help one another in the way of heaven; then you will spend your time well indeed. But in reproving others, I had need also to reprove myself; for I am certain, that I have enjoyed as many precious opportunities of grace, as most of you have; but I have wasted the greatest part of them in vanity and foolery: the Lord give both you and I, and all of us grace to improve our time better.

Oh! what a dreadful account shall we make at the great tribunal, if we waste our time thus, when we shall be called to a strict account, how we have spent every hour of our time, what answer do we think to make, when there shall be so many items brought in: as,

Item. For so much time spent in vain and unprofitable discourse.

Item. For so much time spent in feasting and drinking.

Item. For so much time wasted at cards and dice.

Item. For so much time spent in pride and ambition.

Item, For so much time spent in idleness,

But, *Item,* for so much time spent in self-examination, in repenting, fasting, praying, and godly conference : Oh ! how shall we be able to answer this before the great judge ?

Now for pagans and heathens, who know not God, nor of a future state, for them to waste their time in fleshly lust is not so much. But ye that live under the Gospel, under the calls of God, under the striveings of his spirit, under the offers of Grace : For us to waste our golden seasons of grace in following our carnal delights, in deafning our ears to his call, in grieving h s spirit, and abusing his gracious offers of mercy for us to do it : Oh ! how sad and dreadful will our doom be at last ! we above all others, shall have the hottest place in hell. Oh ! it is a sad consideration for a wicked man to think of, that when they come to hell, then they will cry out, Oh ! that I had spent my time better ! Oh ! that I had in time hearken'd to the call of God, and obey'd the motions of his spirit ! Oh ! the many days and nights that I have spent in rioting and drinking ! Oh ! the many hours that I consumed in playing and gaming ! If I had but spent all that time in examining my heart and life, in fasting, in praying, and in repenting, in weeping for my sins, in begging for pardon and mercy, for the sake of Christ, in striving to help others with me in the way to heaven, and

and in labouring to work out my own salvation.

If I had but thus spent my time, where might I now have been! I should never have been here in this dreadful place, but now I should have been amongst yonder saints, rejoicing and triumphing with them in glory: Oh! that the time past could but be called back again, and the years that I have so vainly spent: Oh! how that I could be admitted once more into the assembly of God's saints: Oh! that God would try me once more with the means of grace, (tho' I lived by nothing but by bread and water.) Oh! how I would condemn the world, and the vanities thereof. Oh! how strictly, how holy, how and purely would I live. Oh! it would make one's heart even to ake, to consider what lamentable outcries these damn'd souls will then make. How often are they told, and told again, what will become of them, if they consume their precious time in fleshly lusts and pleasures; and yet all the warnings in the world would not prevail: nay, if the messengers of God, and all their godly friends and neighbours did fall on their knees to them for the sake of Christ that died for them, that they would take pity upon their poor souls, and forsake their wicked courses, and seek for mercy and pardon before it be too late: But all the means in the world would not prevail with them. And yet

when time is at an end, and the gate of mercy is shut, and nothing but an eternity of torments is before them, then they'll wring their hands and gnash their teeth, and cry out Oh that God would try me once more. Sure, if the devil did not bewitch people, certainly they would never do as they do. *How often saith Christ, would I have gathered you together as a Hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but yet would not.* Matth. 25. 31. I hope you will consider of these things in Time, before it be too late.

III. My third use shall be of exhortation. Beloved friends, you see here how the Angel *swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer.* What is the reason then that you will not be persuaded to take hold of time, in seeking of mercy and reconciliation with God before it be too late? Oh! how lovingly God exhortates with his people, *Jer. 13. 17. O Jerusalem, wilt thou never be made clean? Oh! when shall it once be!*

Thus he exhortates with every stubborn rebellious sinner: O! sinner when wilt thou be made clean; why wilt thou not repent, and be reformed? How long shall I stand offering thee Christ, pardon and peace, and thou not accept of the offer? How long shall I stand waiting for thy repentance, and thou continuest in thy Impenitency, and weariest my patience, and will not turn? How long shall I stand

stand proffering thee mercy and pardon, and thou despise it? What is the reason that no means will work upon thee? How often have I sought to allure thee with mercies, and terrify thee with judgments; and have given thee warning after warning, and yet nothing will prevail? Is the loss of thy immortal soul, the loss of Heaven and everlasting life, so small a matter with thee, that thou regardest it no more? Is it nothing to endure everlasting burnings? Is it nothing to lie amongst devils in the lake of fire and brimstone? For my part, I desire, not thy everlasting misery, but had rather that thou wouldest in time accept of mercy, that thou mayest be saved: If I had any delight in thy damnation, thou hadst been in hell long before this time: I had never stood waiting upon thee so long as I have done suffering thee to grieve my spirit, to tire my patience, to turn my grace into wantonness, to trample underfoot the blood of my dear son, that was shed to wash away thy sins: If I had delighted in thy damnation, I had never called upon thee so often as I have done. Oh! sinner, do I deserve this unkind dealings at thy hands, that thou still abusest my mercy and goodness: When wilt thou return to me with a full resolution to leave thy sins, and become a new creature, and accept of mercy offered? When shall that time come; Oh! when shall it once be? It is such a time as would rejoice the angels to behold it. E 4 And,

And, Friends, is it not a great deal better to be a joy to angels, than to be a laughing stock to devils? Oh! Friends, if all these loving exhortations will not prevail with you I know not what will.

IV. My fourth use shall be a use of motives: If all these exhortations will not prevail, I will lay down serious considerations, to move you to a timely repentance; and I will try what they can do, whether by them you will be stirred up to the improvement of your golden season of grace before it be at an end.

I. Consider, first, how precious your time in this world is, it is far more precious than Gold; now all the Gold, all the riches, and all the treasure in this world, cannot purchase one minute of time when it is gone and past; people don't know how precious their time is, until they come to the end of it, and when once time is at an end, O then they know the worth of it: Now sinners enquire, what they shall do to pass away their time; time is so plenty with them, that they know not what to do with it; tho' they have so many sinful lusts to mortifie, so many corruptions to subdue, so many sins to repent of, Christ to get an interest in, and their pardon to sue out, and temptations to strive against, so much work to do, for God and their own souls, and the souls of others, and yet they know not how to spend their time. Ay, but when once they do come

to lie upon their death-bed, and see nothing before them but an eternity of misery: Oh! then they would give ten thousand worlds, if they had them, but for one year, or but for one quarter of a Year of that time which they so vainly spent? oh! if people did but know the worth of time, as much as they will do then, then they would away with their cards and dice, and other pastimes, and they would spend every minute of it to the best advantage they can for their souls eternal welfare.

2. Consider, how dangerous it is too squander and waste away their precious time in fleshly lusts and pleasures: It may be you think of repenting hereafter, when you come to lie upon your death-bed, but who knows but that you may die suddenly, as many do without the least space to repent; and besides, it is a madness for any to think to do that great work in an instant of time: But supposing you should have a breathing space at the day of death, yet who knows how long the season of grace may continue? *Behold, saith the apostle, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation!* 1. Cor. 6. 4. It is now that God calls, and offers you his Spirit to assist and help you, and promises to accept you, if you will but, come at his call, before he hath given you over to yourselves; God who offers you grace to day, it may be he will not offer it again to morrow: I have read a sad story of an extra-

vagant young man, who being often admonished by his godly friends to repent and reform his wicked life, he presumptuously gave them this answer: *That, if, when he lay a dying, he did but say three words of repentance he should do well enough:* These three words I suppose was to be, *Lord have mercy upon me.* But on a certain time, as he was riding over a narrow bridge with his horse, his horse slipped and fell in with him, and after struggling awhile, he was heard to speak these three words, *Devil take all.* These are his three words of repentance, it is therefore exceeding dangerous to put off our great work, until time is at an end.

3. Consider, that the season and opportunity of grace is the greatest mercy that we can enjoy. It is such a mercy as was never vouchsafed to the fallen Angels: Thus God's mercies are renewed to us every morning; because he every morning gives us, as it were a new life, and a new opportunity of grace: and Friends, if you squander and trifle away such golden opportunities, as God hath put into your hands, you trample under Feet one of the choicest of God's mercies; and do you think that God will bear this at your hands?

4. Consider, that your accepted time, and Season of grace is continually wasting, whether you improve it well or not: Time is continually passing away; and it will not stay for you whilst you are following your sinful pleasures,

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ures, and wearying of God's patience, but is continually hast'ning away; when once the sun is up, it keeps its course, and never ceases going on, until it is gone down; when once a candle is lighted, it keeps continually burning until it is done; when once a glass is turned, it never ceases running until it is out; so soon as a man is born, God doth immediately put an opportunity of grace into his hands, and then it passes, and it keeps passing away, and never ceases running until it is at end; one day follows another, one sabbath follows another, and so time keeps running on, until at last, it will cease and be no longer.

5. Consider, How dreadful your state will be at last, if time should be at an end, before you have made your peace with God: if whilst you are sinning away your precious time God should clap a curse upon your souls, and swear in his wrath that you should never enter into his rest? and so shut against you the door of mercy for ever. Oh! what a dreadful condition will you be in then. Oh! Then it had been well for you if you had never been born! Then you may knock at the gate of mercy too late, as the foolish Virgins did: Saying *Lord open unto us*. But the Lord will send you away with this dreadful Sentence, *I know you not, depart from me ye workers of Iniquity*. This is the most dreadfullest place that is to be found in the gospel; read and tremble at it; it is in
Luke

Luke 19. 41. 42. And he drew nigh to Jerusalem, he looked about, (but it was with tears in his eyes,) he wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thy eyes.

Most fearful is the example of *Francis Spira*; so dreadful it is, that it is enough to make the stoutest heart to ake, to hear the story of it: This *Francis Spira* was a civil lawyer; he was brought up, and lived forty years and more in the *Romish* religion: about that time the sun of the gospel was risen in *Europe*, and this new doctrine he liked and loved so well, that he forsook his *Romish* principles, and embraced the gospel of Christ, and preached it first to his own family, and then to his neighbours, and then in publick meetings to the whole country; insomuch that he converted many from the *Romish* principles to the doctrine of Christ, and caused them to embrace the gospel, until at last he had brought himself into great danger, in that he must either against his knowledge and conscience deny Christ, or else endure the extreamest torments that malice can inflict; or else he must forsake his house and land, his wife and children, yea, his own country, and betake himself to a foreign country, there to endure a thousand miseries; and he not knowing what course to take, nor what to do, the spirit of God came to him, and encouraged

couraged him to stand fast in the faith of Christ, telling him he should not set his hand-writing to the legate, that Christ was able to defend him; and that tho' he did go to prison, and to death; yet the eternal reward remains for him in heaven; yet this miserable Man consulting also with flesh and blood, went and set his hand to the legate; and so in part denied Christ, and then he was fain also to promise, and seal it in his own country; and as he was going the spirit of God met with him the second time, and he thought he heard a voice saying unto him, *Spira! What dost thou here? Whither goest thou? Hast thou, unhappy man! given thy hand-writing to the legate? Yet see thou seal it not in thine own Country: Dost thou think eternal life so mean a thing as to prefer this present life before it? Remember man, that the sufferings of this present life is not worthy of the glory that shall be revealed. If thou, sufferest with Christ, thou shalt also reign with him. Thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; nevertheless the gates of mercy is not quite shut: O heap not sin upon sin, lest thou repentest when it be too late.* Now was Spira in a wilderness of doubt, not knowing whither to go, nor what to do: At last he went and asked counsel of his friends about it; and they, without any consideration, persuaded him, that by no means he should bring himself and them into any danger, but that he would

would go to the legate, and perform what he had promised :

Then in the morning, he desperately gets up, and enters into the congregatism, where Mass, being finished he recites the abjuration, word for word as it was written. This done, he was immediately fined thirty pices of gold, and then restored to his goods, wife and children ; but no sooner was he departed, but he heard a direful voice, saying unto him, *Thou wicked wretch ! thou hast denied me ! Thou hast broken thy vow ! Hence apostate ! Bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal damnation !*

Immediately Spira trembling and quaking fell into a swoon : Help was at hand for the body, but never more could he find any ease in his mind, but was continually tormented with the sense of God's wrath, and was captivated under the revenging hand of God.

Then his Friends began to repent too late of their rash counsel, when he related to those that came to see him, of all the passages that had happened, it made them all to weep and tremble, *As soon as sentence of Christ was passed against me, I knew that I was utterly undone !* He felt a continual torment of his mind, and a continual butchery of his conscience, that he professed, the damned which are in hell, endure not the like misery : *I feel, saith he, that God more and more hardens me ; I am one of those reprobates that God would not have to be*

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be saved! And so continuing in this state for six weeks and more, he then at last ended this miserable life in a dreadful condition.

I assure you, this is the dreadfullest example that ever I read in my whole life; the Lord grant that none of us all may ever come to this.

6. And lastly, Consider what a happy condition you are yet in; that you may enjoy your golden season of grace, that God has not yet done calling, that his spirit has not yet done striving, that his patience has not yet done waiting.

O how lovingly did the Spirit call upon *Francis Spira* the second time, after he had set his hand-writing to the legate, and told him, that yet the gate of mercy was not quite shut. O heap not sin upon sin, lest thou repentest when it will be too late. *What! was not the gate of mercy quite shut?* O what a comfortable word was that! As far as he had gone in renouncing his profession, and denying of Christ, yet it was not too late, yet there was mercy in store for him; and if he had but then obey'd the Spirit, and not gone any farther, but repented of what he had already done. O what a happy man he had been for ever!

V. And lastly, I shall conclude with a few words of exhortation: I shall exhort you, in the words of the apostle, *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* It is so that at last, *Time shall be no longer?* Then let me exhort you, now wisely to redeem your time, your accepted time before it be gone, *O let the time past suffice, wherein we have wrought the will of the Gentiles,* Pet. iv. 3.

Beloved friends, you have wasted enough and too much of your time, in the pleasures of the flesh, and in the works of the devil. O! be persuaded for the Lord's sake, and for your soul's sake, to spend the short remainder of your time in the service of God, in working out your own salvation; whatever ye are about, and where-soever you are, whether alone or in company, yet still be a redeeming of your time: When you are alone, then let your time be redeemed by self-examination, by ejaculation

lation and prayers, by meditations and contemplations; and when you are among company, though it be about the works of your calling, O then be careful to improve your time well; instruct them you see are ignorant, reprove them that are sinful; spend your time when you be together, in discoursing to one another, of the end why were born, of miserable estate by nature, of the sufferings of Christ for your sins, of the shortness of your time, and of your future estate in another world. Let these and such-like discourses fill up your time. Oh! labour with all your might to win the souls of one another, and to help one another in the way to heaven daily, *while it is called to day*: O what a happy work you would perform, if by your seasonable discourse, you would convert a soul to God.

To conclude: Be exhorted to spend that small remnant of your time in praying, repenting of your sins, and working out your salvation; and then at last, when time shall cease and be no longer, you shall be received into an eternity of joy and felicity, there to live and reign for ever.

Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you Understanding.

The End of the Fourth SERMON.

A Confession and Prayer for a penitent Sinner, on this Subject or Discourse.

O Most gracious, most glorious, and eternal Lord God; who art the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and last; thou art God from everlasting, and thy years shall have no end; thou art righteous in all thy works; thou art of purer eyes than
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to behold the least sin with an allowance ; so that as soon as the angels had sinned, thou immediately castest them down out of heaven, and reservest them under chains of darkness, unto the dreadful coming of the great day, without affording them the least hope of mercy, nor the least opportunity of seeking peace, and reconciliation with thee : Whereas when we were lost and undone, by the apostacy of our first parents, thou didst give thy dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, to offer himself a sacrifice upon the cross for us, and for his sake hath put an opportunity into our hands : thou hast given every one of us a day and season wherein we might be accepted ; but, oh, vile wretch that I am, I squandered and trifled away this season of grace, in fleshly lust and pleasures : all that time that thou hast been offering mercy, pardon and peace : all that time I have consumed in gratifying the flesh, and in following my sinful delights : O Lord. I do here with Shame and horror confess that I have throughout the whole course of my life neglected Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer, that would have saved me from wrath and damnation : I have rejected that pardon and peace, which from time to time thou hast stood proffering me ; I have wearied thy patience which has been stretched out into long-suffering. How often hast thou called unto me, inwardly by the spirit : But I have turned a deaf ear to all thy calls and invitations. How often hast thou stood knocking at the door of my hard heart for entrance ; but I have barred it against thee by unbelief and impenitency. Thou hast spared me from one sabbath to another, from one year to another, and still waitest for my repentance ; thou hast sought to move me with mercies, and terrify me with judgments ; yet neither mercies nor judgments would work any good effects upon me. When thou hast smitten me with Affliction, yet then I rebelled more against thee. I made many fair promises to lead a new life, if it should please thee to restore me once more to my former health, and then, thou in mercy, didst try me, as it were, with another life : But then, miserable wretch that I am, I returned again to my old course of life, soon forgetting

getting the promise which I made in my sickness: *Yea, all the day long thou hast stretched out thy hand unto me*, a disobedient and gainfaying wretch, and offered me grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, and hast intreated me to accept of it. But oh, miserable wretch that I am, I have continued in my Rebellion against thee, quenching and grieving thy holy spirit, which would have sealed me unto the day of redemption, wearing thy patience, and abusing thy mercy and goodness, and turning thy grace into wantonness. O Lord, what can I justly expect, but that thou shouldst resolve, that thy spirit shall never more strive with me; and seeing I would not be purged from my Filthiness any more, until that thou hast caused thy fury to rest upon me, and so bind me over to perpetual Wrath; Lord, I confess, if it had not been for wonderful mercy towards me, I might long before this time (amongst devils) been howling, shrieking in that lake that burns with fire and brimstone, O Lord, what a wonder is this, that such a wretch as I am not in hell, that still thou sparest me, and expectest my repentance; that yet there is hope that the gate of mercy is not quite shut against me; sure if thou hadst took any delight in my damnation, thou couldst never have born so much at my hands as thou hast done; thou wouldst never suffered me to abuse thy mercy and goodness as thou hast done: but seeing, O Lord, thou hast spared me so long, and still continueth to me the season and means of grace, O Lord, I will nevermore spend my time as I have done, in following the pleasure of the flesh, and grieving thy holy spirit; and I do propose, and resolve thro' thy grace assisting me, to resign my will to thy holy and heavenly will, and to spend the remainder of my time in obedience to thy holy law, and commandments, and to this end, O Lord, I humbly beseech thee, to grant me the assistance of thy holy spirit, for of myself I can do nothing; and let this thy spirit mollify my hard and obdurate heart, that I may with hearty sorrow, bewail my lost and mispent time, and that I may double diligence for the time to come. O Lord, tho' I have long continued in my rebellion against thee; yet, Lord, I beseech thee, cast me not off now at length, a miserable sinner,

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mer, who returns unto thee with an humble penitent heart ; take not away from me thy holy spirit, tho' it hath along and often been grieved by me : Say not, that now it is too late. Lord, shut not against me the gate of mercy, let not my soul perish, for whom Christ died ; and if it be thy will, that I perish, Lord, I have cast down myself at the Feet of Christ ; but if I perish, I will perish there : Lord I beseech thee give me grace, that I may now prize this mercy better than I have done. O let the time past suffice, wherein I have wrought the will of the *Gentiles*, and followed my sinful lust and pleasures ; and give me grace to dedicate the remainder of my time to thee, and thy service. Lord, make me wise, to know and consider, now in this my day of visitation ; the things that concern my everlasting peace, before they are hid from mine eyes ; and the time which others spend in rioting and gaming, and fleshly lusts. Lord, give me grace to spend that time in fasting, praying, repenting, and labouring to work out my salvation ; so that at last, when time shall cease, and be no longer, I may enter into an eternity of joy and felicity. These, and other mercies, which thou knowest to be needful for me, I humbly beg at thy hand in that form of prayer, which Christ himself taught me, saying,

Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c.

If thou know these things, blessed and happy are you, if you thus redeem your now accepted time and season of grace ; which that we may all do.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the sweet comfortable Fellowship of God the Holy Ghost, be with us, and remain with us, both now, and for evermore. Amen.



Joshua's Resolution

T O

Serve the LORD, &c.

Josh. xxiv. Part of Verse 15.

*But as for me and my House we will serve the
L O R D.*

THESE are the words of JOSHUA to the tribes of *Israel*: For having in this chapter declared unto them, the many benefits which God of his mercy hath bestowed on them; as particularly in *Ver. 15.* in that he hath given them a land they laboured not for, and cities which they built not, and vineyards, and olive-yards to eat of, which they planted not: *Joshua* having thus laid before their eyes God's benefits, he in *Ver. 13.* exhorts them to offer unto God a thankful and obedient heart for those benefits which he hath bestowed upon them: *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: And put away the Gods which your Fathers served, and serve the Lord.* And so I fall immediately upon the words of the text, wherein we have these two considerable things:

First, The freedom which *Joshua* seems to give

Give the tribes of *Israel*, in case they refuse to serve the Lord, that they shall choose who they will serve.

Secondly. His resolution concerning himself and his family : *As for me and my House, we will serve thee Lord.*

Now in this small treatise, I shall join these two together in this one observation: That is, however the men of this world live, whatever they do, what ways soever they follow; a child of God is fully bent, and resolved to cleave to the Lord, and to take care that his family, and all under his charge, walk in the ways of holiness and piety.

Now for my further handling of this subject. I shall proceed after this manner.

First, I shall shew you what the resolution of a christian is.

Secondly, The reason of this resolution. And, *Lastly*, The application.

I. To shew you what the resolution of a christian is. 1. It is a full and firm resolution 2. It is a present resolution. 3. It is a settled and a deliberate resolution.

First, The resolution of a christian is, a full and firm resolution; the Men of this world they naturally choose Sin, death and hell; they choose death and damnation, before life and salvation, they resolutely run on in the ways of luxury. Wantonness, drinking, gaming, and all manner of lewd and loose practices;

ces 1 and though they are told and told again both by the messengers of God's word, and their godly friends, whither these ungodly ways will lead them, yet they will run on still, and take their own course, as if they were in Love with their own ruin and destruction. But, a true christian, after his reproof and admonitions, when he finds that they will not be reclaimed, he, as it were, bids them take their Course and choose whom they will serve as *Joshua* did the people of *Israel*: But for his part he resolved with full bent and purpose of heart, to give himself up to the Lord and choose him for his portion, and to give up himself Soul and body as an instrument for his service.

Now the resolution of a Christian is not a sick-bed promise, but a full bent and purpose of heart to lead a new life. There are many that fairly resolve, but w resolve; every weak promise is not a full resolution. Alas! how many are there, who under a sharp fit of sickness, or under some judgment ready to befall them, will promise what fair new creatures they will become, what new lives they will lead, how holy and how purely they will live; but if it please God to spare them, and give them a Time of respite, then how soon are these vows and promises forgot: Thus the children of *Israel*, how fairly did they promise, *Deut.* 5. 27. *All that the Lord God shall speak, we will*

will hear and do: But though they had a tongue promise, yet they had no hearts to perform; you may see, Verse 29. *O that there was but an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments, that it may be well with them.* But as for a sincere and returning sinner, he not only promises, but he resolves to yield up himself Body and Soul to be the Lord's; yea, the whole frame of his heart is bent that way, as an unconverted wicked sinner goes on in sin, with a full purpose of heart, even so a returning sinner, who is coming to Jesus Christ, serves him with full purpose and resolution of heart. And as a wicked resolute sinner, neither mercies nor judgments, reproofs or admonitions, neither persuading nor entreating by ministers nor friends, will stop him in his sinful course. So on the other side, a returning sinner, that is resolved for Christ and holiness, will not be drawn back, neither by promises nor threatnings, neither by frowns or flatteries: Let his sinful companions entice him by never so many Arguments, he will not consent, but he is fully bent and resolved for heaven and happiness whatever it cost him; and therefore, seeing the weakness of his own flesh, and his eternal Inclinations to be overcome by the least temptation, therefore he applies to the throne of grace, and there he pours out earnest prayers and supplications for the assistance of *divine* grace, to strengthen him in

in the inner man ; he dare not trust to his own strength, he considers how soon *Peter* was overcome notwithstanding his resolution to stand : saying, *if I should die with thee, I will not deny thee* ; and yet because he was too confident of his own strength, it pleased God for his trial, to leave him to himself, how soon he denied and forswore his Lord and saviour, he began to curse and swear, *that he knew him not*, Matt. 26. Now I say, a returning sinner, considering this, he dares not resolve in his own strength, but labours and endeavours in the use of all means to get strength from heaven, and in the strength of Christ, he strives and labours to go on towards the heavenly mark he aims at, he rests not in any certain attainments, but truly resolves by the help of divine Grace, towards the Mortification of the whole Body of sin, and for the attainment of Grace and Holiness unto Perfection.

And after he had done his best, yet still he feels lust to be strong in him, and grace weak, therefore he is more and more outrageous against his natural inclinations, and his earnest desire and endeavours are to be more and more humble, more patient, more meek, more holy, and more heavenly ; let the devil tempt him with riches, honour, long life, and all earthly happiness, on condition, that he turns back again into the ways of sin, yet he will not yield, but he rests him with all his might and strength ;

nay,

ay, though all the powers of hell use their utmost endeavours to draw him back, though the flesh entice, and the wicked world use all means to discourage him, yet in spite of them all, he is resolv'd to go on in his holy course; *for, neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, is able to seperate him from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord,* Rom. viii. Thus a sincere returning sinner is fully bent and resolved to give himself up body and soul to the Lord: And the whole frame and bent of his heart is towards grace and holiness.

That is the first thing considerable, that a christian resolution is a full resolution.

Secondly, It is a present resolution, he is not for putting it off from one time to another, as if he did not care whether it was done or no. Even so a christian that is fully bent and resolved after grace and holiness, he longs and desires for the attainment of his holy ends, the whole frame of his heart is set that way; and therefore he presently sets about the work without delay. Indeed, a hypocrite has many purposes and resolutions to repent, and become a new creature; but he delays and puts off from one time to another, being loth for the present to part with sweet sin, with his belov'd lust, which shews, that his resolution is not a firm and settled resolution, his purposes are unground and hypocritical.

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There was one *Luke 9. 61.* who made a kind of a resolution to follow Christ ; but this resolution was not for the present, he begged liberty to go once to his sinful companions, and take his leave of them. *Lord, saith he, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.* This shews, that his purpose and resolution was not sincere ; he made a kind of resolution to follow Christ ; but here lies the case, there was not a thorough change wrought in him, he had not rooted out his beloved sin ; the frame and bent of his heart was more towards the following of his lust, than it was to follow Christ : Therefore in setting his hand to Christ, and yet looking back with pleasure and delight upon his old sinful course of Life, he was not fit for the kingdom of heaven ; as our Saviour tells him, *Ver. 61. Lord, saith he, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

Thus a wicked man, when he is intreated and persuaded by a minister of God's word, or by any of his godly relations, to repent and forsake his evil practises, and to lead a new life, he perhaps under these godly admonitions, makes fair promises, and has some purposes and resolutions to repent, and become a new creature, and yet notwithstanding these purposes and resolutions, he has many delays and puts-off, because his heart remains still wedded

wedded to his lust. The drunkard he promises, that he will return and follow Christ; but he takes leave first to go once more to the ale-house, and takes leave of his drunken companions, and take one merry Cup more with them, and then he would come and follow Christ; he hath friends at home at his house, and he must first go and take his leave of them, and make one merry meeting among them, and enjoy a little more of their jovial company, then he will follow Christ. The covetous he must have leave first to pursue after a little more of this worlds good, and then he will follow Christ. The voluptuous he must have leave first to partake a little more of the sweet sin, he must enjoy a little more of his beloved pleasure, he must down with one sweet morsel more, and then he will follow Christ.

Thus Sin is so sweet unto a wicked Man, the World and the flesh is so bewitching, that notwithstanding a sinner's fair promises and purposes to repent, and turn to God, that by these he is hindred of putting any thing into practise, but procrastinates and puts off from one time to another, until, perhaps time is at an end: before he has done any thing in order to his eternal Salvation.

But, a Christian that is fully and firmly resolved to dedicate himself to the Lord and his service, so that the whole frame of his heart

is bent that way, he is so far from delaying and putting off from one time to another, that he is even restless, and can find no contentment in any thing he enjoys, until he has got an interest in Christ, until he has got some assurance of the love of God, and the pardon of his sin; it grieves him to the very heart, to think that he should be so wild and foolish, and to waste so much of his precious time, as he has done in fleshly lusts, in abusing God's mercy and goodness, and grieving his spirit, in that he has made a good and gracious God wait upon him so many years, whilst he continued to run on in a course of rebellion against him. And therefore he now resolves through the grace of God's assisting him from this time forward, to bid an everlasting farewell to his beloved sin, he now fully resolves to continue no longer in his sinful course of life; he is ready to cry out with St. *Augustine*, *How long shall I say, Tomorrow, Tomorrow? Why shall not this day be the day of my conversion.* He therefore, without delay, sets about the work of conversion; he now begins to beg, labour, and strive to work out his salvation.

Thus a Christian's resolution is a present Resolution.

Thirdly and lastly, A Christian's resolution is a settled and deliberate resolution.

He doth not as many do, take up a sudden and inconsiderate resolution to follow Christ; and he diligently considers,

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I. What it might cost him to be a thorough christian, the death of his beloved sin, that he knows it must cost him, he knows he must part with every sin; even with his most flesh-pleasing sin for Christ, or else he can be no christian: But he considers that it may cost him the loss of his credit and good name, the loss of liberty, nay, the loss of his life.

Now a penitent sinner considers diligently of all these things before he enters upon his christian course, lest after he has gone far with Christ, persecution comes, and he apostatize and fall away, and so his latter end be worse than his beginning: *What man, saith our Saviour, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it, lest happily after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold him begin to mock him,* Luke 14. 28. 29. *So whosoever forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple,* Verse 33. Many have gone far with Christ; so far as their interest lay with the interest of Christ; but when the interest of Christ and their own interest is crossed, then they have apostatiz'd and fell away. But on the contrary, a wise christian, before he enters upon a new life, he first lets down and counts the cost; he considers upon *Peter*, how sadly he fell when Christ had left him unto himself, notwithstanding his strong resolution:

tion : saying, *If all should deny thee, yet will not I.* Therefore he dares not purpose and resolve in his own strength ; for he knows himself to be very weak, and cannot move one step towards heaven, without divine assistance ; therefore he is day and night in earnest prayer to God, for strength from heaven and so in the strength of Christ he is resolved to take him for better or worse ; he is resolved to run all hazards with him, he is resolved to venture all for him ; to venture the loss of a good name, the loss of liberty, and the loss of life itself ; as he expects to reign with Christ, so he resolves to choose him with all his offices, as a prophet to instruct him, as a king to reign over him, and rule in him, as a saviour to save him from sin, as well as from punishment ; he is resolved to out with his right-hand sins, and out with his right-eye sins ; he is resolved to spare no sin, but to strive against it, watch against it, and fight against it with all his might ; he is resolved to follow Christ through all difficulties and dangers, through sufferings and persecutions, through life and death, until he comes to reign with Christ in glory.

Thus have I done with the first thing considerable, what the resolution of a christian is ; I must be very brief in what follows.

II. The reason of the necessity of this resolution.

lution. Now for a christian to make a settled and firm resolution is very necessary.

1. Because that until a man sets a firm and full resolution to turn to God, he is in a ready way to fall by every temptation; he is apt to put off and delay his repentance from time to time, he is still liable to give himself more and more liberty to all kind of wickedness, to let the bridle loose to all lust; nay, until a man comes into a full and settled resolution, he lies in the ready road to open prophaneness, and to the neglect of God and holy duties. But when a man comes to a resolved point, when the whole frame and bent of his heart is set towards Christ and holiness, then there will appear earnest endeavours after the thing resolved upon. This was the resolution of Job, Job 31. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes, why then shall I think upon a maid? As if he had said, I have resolved and made a covenant with myself, as much as in me lies, to avoid all temptation of sin; why then should I run myself into temptation?* This also was the resolution of David, Psal. 39. 1. *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue, I will keep my mouth with a bridle.*

2. This settled and firm resolution is necessary to repentance, because it is the first step to repentance. A man may do many things in order to a work of conversion, yet if he have not a settled and firm resolution to turn to

God, he were as good do nothing. But when once a man comes to set up a settled, firm, sincere and hearty resolution to cleave fully and wholly to the Lord, and to resign up all the faculties of his soul to him, then the work is more than half done. All the other duties of christianity will seem easy and pleasant. David, he resolved and swore, and therefore he would perform: *I have sworn, faith he, and therefore will perform, that I will keep thy statutes*, Psalm cxix. 106.

Thus much for the doctrinal part ; I shall be very short in the application.

There is but one use that I shall make of this point, and that shall be a use of exhortation : It is so, that whatever the people of Israel did, *Joshua* was resolved that he and his house will serve the Lord.

In the first place, make a firm resolution, to give up your own selves to the Lord, and his service ; let the men of this world do what they please if they will not be reformed, let them take their course ; if they are so in love with hell and damnation, so that they will run headlong thither, let them take their course.

But, my dear friends, into whose hands this little book shall come, do you sincerely resolve to give yourselves up to the Lord, and his service ; if others will be for hell, do you resolve to be for heaven ; whatever it cost you, resolve to cleave close to the Lord in opposi-

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on to the malice of the devil, the inticement^s of the flesh, and the temptations of the wicked world. If wicked men should intice and seek to draw you into sin with them, do not yield, but rather answer them, as *Joseph* did his mistress, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Gen. 39. 9. If at any time any of your old sinful companions do intice, perswade, and intreat you to go with them to drinking, gaming, or any other vile exercises, resolve with yourselves, never to yield to none of their perswaded arguments; labour to obey the counsel of *Solomon*, *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*

Resolve to take Christ in all his offices, in all his inconveniences, resolve to run all hazards with him; be exhorted now without delay, to bid an everlasting farewell to all your sins; and from henceforth make a firm covenant with thy body and soul to be his, saying, Lord, I do here lament, and am heartily grieved that I have spent so much of my time in rebellion against thee, and in choosing the ways of sin, but I do here, from this time forward, firmly resolve to bid an utter defiance to all sin, and through thy grace enabling me now to covenant with thee to be thine, and to forsake all that is near and dear unto me in this world for thy sake; I am resolved never more to yield myself a servant to sin and satan, but to wafch against all temptations, whether

of prosperity or adversity, but I do resolve to take thee for my portion and happiness, promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life, and I do here fully resolve to choose Jesus Christ as the way to the father, and to take my lot with him and to run all hazards with him, resting upon him alone, in his way for salvation.

Secondly, resolve not only to give up yourselves to the Lord, but resolve to use your utmost endeavours, that all under your charge may likewise serve the Lord : *Joshua* here did, not only resolve to serve the Lord himself, but he resolved both he and his should serve the Lord.

For my part I have been in many families, but I never met but with here and there one, where the worship of God and religious exercises hath been set among them, I may speak it with shame enough ; for they never regarded what became of their immortal souls.

Truly friends, I am apt to think, that there being such a multitude of prophane, irreligious families among us in *England*, that it is a fore-runner of some sad judgment approaching : For, if the scripture be the true word of God, so indeed we must expect some sad calamity to befall us ere long, if there be not a speedy reformation in houses and families. See what a threatning there lies in the word of God against such, *Jer. 10. 25. That the Lord will*

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pour out his fury upon the heathen that know him not, and upon the nations that call not upon his name. The heathen here is meant, all ungodly, irreligious families. Let us, the people of this land, have a care, that this sentence be not pronounced against us ; many of late have complained of the badness of the times, that trading is dead, money scarce, and every thing is dear.

But, friends, let there but be a thought of reformation in houses and families, and then you will soon see as peaceable and happy times as ever was known since *England* has been inhabited. But if people will still remain to be irreligious and prophane in their families, I am afraid that some sadder judgment will befall us than ever yet we have seen : how can we expect deliverance from our enemies, and happy times whilst the worship of God is so much neglected, and family duties never regarded ?

To conclude: You that are parents, masters, and householders, if ever you desire your own good, and a blessing upon your families, and undertakings, and the good of this nation, be entreated now to suffer the word of exhortation ; be exhorted now, no longer to neglect the worship and service of God in your families, but as often as you see your servants and children sin against God, reprove them ; where you see them ignorant, instruct them.

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Let me counsel you, to do this at convenient opportunities, to catechise your children and servants, at least once every week, and instruct them in the principles of religion: Every Lord's day in the morning, call them up earlier than you do on other days; and as soon as they have done their necessary business, before you go with them to the publick worship of God, read to them some private instruction concerning what they have read; and call upon them to read some of God's word, and then join with them in prayer; and after publick worship call every one of them to an account, concerning the sermon they heard, and stir up their memories with it, and edify them as much as you can with these good instructions, which the preacher has delivered out of the word of God, and then instruct them in the principles of religion: and conclude the evening of the Lord's day in reading, and godly conferences, singing of psalms and praying: And every morning in the week, call your children and servants together, and pray with them, before they and you go about the works of your calling: And let godly conference and prayer be every evening's exercise, before you go to rest; and make a firm and strong resolution, as *Joshua* did here, that, let others serve whom they will, you'll serve the Lord God of Israel, saying, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

The End of the Fifth SERMON.

A Prayer for a Family.

O Most gracious and ever-blessed Lord God, who art perfect in holiness, and infinite in all thy perfections, look down from Heaven we beseech thee with an eye of pity and compassion upon thine unworthy servants sinful dusts and ashes; who desires at this time with all reverence and humility, to address ourselves unto thee, to offer unto thee our portions and request in thy son's name; for, Lord, we confess, that we are conceived and born in sin, we brought into this world a stock of original corruption, which we have derived from our first parents actual transgressions; and, if that were not enough to make us miserable for ever, we have gone on all our lives in a course of actual rebellion against thee; we are naturally prone to all manner of evil, but we are backward and averse to any thing that is good: Lord, we confess as we have grown in years, so we have encreased in all manner of sin and ungodliness, so that we have abused thy goodness, which should have led us to repentance; we have run wilfully into sin, against the light of our knowledge, against the dictates of our own consciences, we have grieved thy spirit, wearied thy patience, and turned a deaf ear to thy heavenly calls, and slighted thy offers of grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ. Ah! wile wretches that we are, we have lived as if thou didst send us into the world for nothing but to gratify the flesh and please our sensual appetites; but we have forgot these high and holy ends, which thou hast made for us, which is to live to thy praise and glory: How often hast thou stood knocking at the door of our hard hearts for entrance, but we have barred them up against thee by impenitency and unbelief? If thou, Lord, shouldst deal with us according to our deserts, what can we expect at thy hands but wrath, and our everlasting condemnation? But, Lord, thou hast cut off thine unspeakable love towards mankind, sent thy dear son into the world to be a propitiation for our sins, and by his sufferings and death, to take away the sins of the world: we humbly pray thee for

for his sake, and for that bitter death and bloody passion's sake, which we believe, he hath suffered for us, that thou wouldst pardon and forgive us all our sins; blot them we beseech thee, out of the book of thy remembrance, nail them to his cross, and bury them in his grave, that they may never rise up against us, to shame and confound us in this world, or to condemn us for ever in the world to come: And to this end, Lord, we humbly pray thee, that thou wouldst give us a true and lively faith in his merits: O let not this be an aggravation of our condemnation, that we have had a saviour offered us, but we have wilfully rejected him; but grant, Lord, that we may heartily and thankfully accept of that redemption which he has purchas'd for us; grant that we may receive and embrace him upon such terms as he has offered to us in the gospel. O let Christ be more precious in our eyes, yea, more precious than gold and silver; and grant that we may esteem all the riches, and all the pleasures of this world to be but as dross and dung in comparison of Christ; for what shall it profit us if we should gain all the riches, and all the pleasures of this world, and at last lose Christ and our immortal souls? And how miserable will our condition be, if we should die in a chistleless Estate? Lord, we pray thee unite us to Christ by faith, that we may be one with Christ, and Christ with us; and wean our hearts, we beseech thee, from the love of all earthly things, and continually live and converse with thee above while we walk and act here upon earth. And, Lord, we humbly beg of thee, that thou wouldst work in us a godly sorrow for all our sins past, let it heartily repent us, that we should ever be so vile as to offend so good and gracious a God as thou art: Grant, Lord, that we may put the knife of mortification to the throat of our beloved lust: Grant that we may learn to cut off our right hand sins, and pluck out our right eye sins. O that thou wouldst be pleased to give us a new nature, and make holiness to be natural to us even as sin hath been natural to us: Mollify, we beseech thee, our hard hearts, and write thy laws upon them: Change, we beseech thee, our natures, and renew our wills, and conform them to thy holy and heavenly

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only will ; and grant us the guidance, and assistance of
thy holy spirit, that we may yield hearty and sincere o-
bedience to thy will : Let us not any longer allow our-
selves in the commission of any known sin, nor in the o-
mission of any known duty ; and grant that we may hence-
forth fight against sin, and resist all the temptations of the
evil, the flesh and the world, that sin more and more dy-
ing and declining in us, grace and holiness may more and
more grow, and increase in us, that going on from one de-
gree of grace to another, at last we may be perfect and
compleated in glory. And, Lord, we humbly pray thee,
that thou wouldst look with an eye of pity and compassion
upon this sinful nation, unto which we belong : We must
confess that we have been a disobedient and gain-saying
people, thy mercies would neither win us, nor yet thy
judgment awaken us, nor none of thy acts of providence
would any ways work upon us, but we having gone on ob-
stinately in our rebellion against thee ; so that thou might-
est e'er this time have justly deliver'd us up as a prey to
our enemies : Bless, we beseech thee, the King's majesty
both at home and abroad, give him victory and success o-
ver all his enemies : Bring to nought, we beseech thee,
those plots and conspiracies, which are contrived against
thy glory ; and the good of thy church : Give him, we beseech
thee, a long and prosperous reign over us here on earth, and
at last to crown him with everlasting glory in the life to
come. Consider, we beseech thee, all such as suffer any
kind of affliction, whether of body or mind, sanctify, we
beseech thee, afflictions unto them, that they may work
for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glo-
ry : And as thou hast hitherto preserved us from our infan-
cy unto this present day and hour ; so we beseech thee,
continue thy care over us, by thy divine providence, and
command thy holy angels to pitch thy tents round about
our defence and safety : Bless us, we beseech thee,
both in our going out and coming in, both in our lying
down and rising, that whether we sleep or wake, live or
die, we may be always thine ; Lord, we pray thee, make
us so wise as that we may know and consider in this our day
of

of visitation, those things which concern our everlasting peace, before they are hid from our eyes: And grant that we may live every day, as if it were our last day, and so order our thoughts, words and actions; so that we may give up our accounts at last with joy, and inherit everlasting life: These blessings, and whatever else thou knowest requisite and necessary for us, we humbly beg and crave at thy hands, upon the account, and through the mercies of Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour; in whose name and words, we further call upon thee, as he himself hath taught us, saying,

Our Father, &c.



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T H E

Plain Way to *HEAVEN*.

Matth. xix. 16. *Good Master, what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life.*

TH E Reason why I give these directions, because so many thousands flock to Hell, when they verily think they are in the way to Heaven: And others go securely on in their sins, running on in all kind of wickedness, not considering what will become of them, until they drop into Hell.

First, I will give you a short hint of the dreadful estate of the wicked; and of the joyful estate of the Godly; with some directions in order to your Salvation.

Consider, first, all you that continue in your sins, and will not be perswaded to repent, and lead a new Life, how dreadful your estate will be at last; for as long as you remain in your unconverted estate, God and you are enemies; you are under his wrath and curse; you are slaves to the devil: And besides all this, you are in danger every hour of dropping into Hell; you know not how suddenly death may seize upon you: And then if you are unprepared, you shall be hauled by the Devils down to Hell, where you shall be kept in Chains and darkness,

darkness, unto the dreadful Judgment of the great day; and then your bodies shall be raised to life again, and be summoned before the judgment-seat of Christ; where you shall give a strict account for all things that you have thought, done, or spoken in your life-time: there you shall stand trembling before your offended Judge, expecting that doleful Sentence to be pronounced upon you, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting Fire; prepared for the devil and his angels.*

No sooner is this dreadful sentence past, but away you must be gone, away you shall be hurried by the devils, with the rest of your damned crew, down into the lake, that burns with fire and brimstone, and never have ease nor end.

But, on the other side, consider how happy your conditions will be, if you in time repent and forsake your sins, and become new creatures; that then God will be your Father, Christ will be your brother, and the Spirit will be your comforter: You shall be filled with the joys of the holy Ghost, which a thousand times surpasseth all worldly joys; you shall have the free and full pardon of all your sins, so that they shall be remembered no more.

And besides all this, whensoever death comes, whether sooner or later, you shall be sure of heaven, and at your last gasp, the angels shall carry your soul as they did the soul of *Lazarus*, into the kingdom of heaven. And a

For your body, that shall be laid in the grave, as in the bed of Christ, there to rest until the glorious morning of the resurrection; and then your bodies shall be raised again, and fashion'd like unto the glorious body of Christ; and soul and body being then reunited, you shall be open acknowledged, and hear that comfortable sentence pronounced unto you, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning of the world.* Then you shall be receiv'd with rejoicing and triumphing into the heaven of heavens, the place of joy and bliss. There you shall be stript of all your robes of mortality, and be cloathed in immortality; then you shall sit down to rest with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* in the kingdom of heaven. There you shall possess such divine treasure, such rare joys; yea, variety of joys, and such sweet delights as no mortal eye hath ever seen, no mortal ear hath ever heard, nor can it enter into the heart to conceive, what joys and delights God hath prepar'd for you in heaven, then you shall be for ever free from all kind of sin and sorrow: *There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes,* Rev. xxi. 4. There shall be life without death, health without sickness, and pleasure without pain; as you shall be free from all

evil, so you shall enjoy all the good, that can be enjoyed: There you shall rejoice one with another, and with one heart and voice shall there sing praises and hallelujahs to God, and to the lamb that sits upon the throne for ever and ever.

And now, I hope you are ready to ask, what shall we do, that we may escape everlasting torments, and get safe to heaven? And begin to be pricked at the heart, and are ready to say, what shall we do to be saved.

Ans. If it be so that you earnestly desire to know the way to heaven, and are willing to walk in that way, then, as I in my little book for young ones, gave *nine directions*, what they should do to escape hell and attain heaven; so here I will give you some directions, *what you shall do to be saved*; and instead of many, I will only give you these two: that is, (*repent and believe the gospel*) follow those two directions, and you are in the right way to heaven: The law indeed require perfect obedience; but no meer man since the fall, is able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, and so, by the works of the law, can never be saved.

God has, by Christ our redeemer required *faith* and *repentance*, as the condition of the gospel, by which eternal life is to be had. *Faith and repentance* is all that God requires, in order to our Salvation: *Repent, and believe the*

the gospel and you shall certainly be saved, I will give you as plain directions, as possible I can, how you shall attain in these two graces.

First for repentance. You must know that there are two kinds of repentance; there is a false repentance, and a true repentance.

A false repentance, is that which a man is given to, thro' fear of hell and damnation; when a wicked man lies upon his death-bed, when he seems to be sorry for his sins past, and makes many fair promises of a new life; if it should please God to restore him to his former health, he follows his old course again. Now this kind of repentance can never be effectual to salvation.

II. Now you must mind what true repentance is.

True repentance is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and Endeavour after new obedience.

But now, seeing without this repentance there is no getting to heaven, and that we cannot repent of ourselves, it is of God's free gift; I will therefore give you some plain directions how repentance may be had, and how to go through with it; for tho' we cannot repent of ourselves, yet if we do not repent, the fault lies upon us.

1. The

1. The first step to true repentance, is the examination of yourselves, try your hearts, and search into your former lives, how, and after what manner you have spent your time since you have been a child ; and to this end, I counsel you to make a catalogue of your sins you can possibly call to mind ; for which purpose you must take the ten commandments for your pattern.

2. The second step to true repentance, is the confession of those sins you have thus found out : You must spread them all before the Lord, and confess them all in particular, with all circumstances, as, the time when, place where, and manner how, such and such things were committed. Now many confess in general, that they are sinners, but few confess their sins : And if your sins are so innumerable, that you cannot find out every particular sin, so as to confess them all in particular, then confess the rest in general : And there is no doubt but God will take this for a true and sincere confession, in that there is no known sin that you would willingly hide from God.

3. Another step to true repentance, is godly sorrow for those sins thus confessed : And it is godly sorrow that works repentance unto salvation, never to be repented of. Now for the obtaining of this godly sorrow, you must use these means.

1. Lay to heart, how good and how merciful

God hath been to you ; how many tokens of his love and kindness he hath bestowed upon you, and yet how ill you have requited him. Seriously consider, how he hath delivered you from such and such enemies : That notwithstanding your many provocations, yet he hath borne with you all this while : He hath patience with you, and waits for your repentance, who might in justice have snatched you away whilst you were sinning, and sent you quick to everlasting burnings : Yet still he spares you ; yet he gives you every day fresh supplies of his mercy : And, as before you were to make a catalogue of your sins, so here make a catalogue of God's mercies, those several kinds of mercies and favours you have received from him, and then lay to heart what a base and unthankful wretch you have been, thus to provoke and grieve so good and merciful a God. Think thus with yourself, *O that I should be such a base, vile wretch, for to provoke and grieve so long, a father that has been so good and gracious unto me ! So merciful a Saviour that died for me.*

Such considerations deeply laid to heart, will prick your heart into godly sorrow for your sins ; as *Peter*, when he considered how he denied Christ, *He went out, and wept bitterly.* Mat. 26. 75.

2. Keep in mind the most of those sins whereby you have most dishonoured God, and grieved

grieved his spirit: This also will be a means to work in you godly sorrow.

3. Ply the throne of grace, by earnest and constant prayer, that God might take away that stony heart of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh, as he hath promised, *Ezek. 36. 26*. But it may be, God will seem not to hear your prayers presently, if therefore you cannot find your heart to relent the first time, go and pray again and again, and give God no rest till he hear you; and then of a certain, one time or other God will melt your heart into godly sorrow and remorse for your former sins; and then this excellent grace of repentance is began and wrought in you.

4. The next thing to be done is this, *Begheavily to God for the pardon of your former sins that they may be cast behind his back, that they may be washed away in the blood of Christ.*

And then lastly, make a firm, strong and settled resolution (henceforth to lead a new life;) this must not be a weak resolution, but it must be a settled, a deliberate resolution. Now when a man seriously considers, that except he becomes a new creature, he cannot be saved; and therefore takes up a strong and fix'd resolution henceforth to lead a new life, the work is more than half done; that man is not far from the kingdom of heaven. Thus far the act of repentance: Now I will give you some helps for the daily renewing of your repentance.

1. Every

1. Every morning as soon as you rise, prostrate yourselves before the throne of grace, and earnestly beg for God's assisting grace, to keep you from falling into any kind of sin that may: For after a man is regenerated, he is yet daily liable to fall foul into sin, without the assistance of God's special grace.

2. When you have thus done, then go about the works of your calling: But set a strict and continual watch over your heart; and all your senses. And as often as the devil doth tempt you to any kind of sin, or doth offer you any bait, then immediately lift up your heart to God, by ejaculatory prayer, as thus: "Lord, banish satan at this time, that he don't overcome me. Lord, preserve me this once, from falling into sin: Lord, have mercy on my soul, and strengthen me against this temptation of the devil, that I be not overcome." And if wicked men should at any time, seek to draw you into sin, then make a firm resolution with yourself, never to consent, and as much as possible you can keep yourself from the company of wicked men. This is the first step in the way to heaven, *Repentance*.

The 2d is *Faith*: As first I directed you to *Repent*, so secondly, *Believe the Gospel*.

Now Faith is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, and he is freely offered to us in the gospel. Now, seeing a true saving faith is not in your

Power, but it is the Gift of God and God always bestows it upon those that use the means which he hath prescribed in his word, for the obtaining of it: I shall therefore give you some directions, what you shall do to have this grace of Faith wrought in you.

1. Be diligent in reading the scriptures: first you must every morning and evening, read some Chapter in your Bible, or else some part of some godly Sermon; and when you read, you must not run it over, and then leave it, you had as good do nothing as do so; but when you read you must take especial heed what you be reading of.

2. Be fervent and diligent in hearing the word preached, *For Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. 10. 17. When you be at Church, you must hearken with all the attention you can; hearken earnestly as if you were to die presently, and go to judgment. And for your Help herein, you must mark what is the Doctrine; what are the reasons and uses, and how many they are.

3. Whilst you are a hearing, set a Resolution to practise what you hear; and when you come home, call over the heads of the Sermon in your mind, and turn every use and direction, that has been delivered into prayer; pray for God's blessing on it, and make it matter of your Meditation all the Week; and then lastly, set to the Practice of it.

4. Another means for the getting of a Saving Faith, is earnest Prayer unto God for it, *Matth. 7. 7. Ask, and you shall have; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* But you will say, *it may be God will not accept of my Prayers; for God heareth not Sinners, and the Prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto him.* I answer, it is wilful sinners that God will not hear; they that pray for mercy, and other good things, and yet hate to be reformed; the prayers of such, God will not regard: But they that come to God in a returning way, with a full purpose to leave their sins, and pray, and earnestly desire Grace, especially this grace of faith, they shall certainly be accepted, and have their prayers granted.

Now concerning the act of Faith, take but this direction: make a Catalogue of all the promises, as you did before of your sins, and God's mercies; and then heartily believe, and assure yourselves, that every one of those promises belong to all those that perform the conditions of those promises: And if you perform the conditions, then those Promises belong to you. As for Instance, I will name this one particular Promise, *Matth. 19. 29. Every one that hath forsaken houses, or Brethren, or Sister, or Father or Mother, or Wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*

Which God of his infinite mercy grant unto us all, Amen.

THE
Future State of Man:
OR, A
TREATISE
OF THE
RESURRECTION.

In a Funeral Sermon

John v. 28, 29.

Marvel not at this, the hour is coming, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

OUR blessed Saviour in these words, sets forth unto us the state and condition of all men at the last day; for though sin hath brought death into the world, and nothing is more certain than death, so nothing is more certain than our bodies must one day be raised again from the dust of the earth; all other

crea-

ures, which move upon the earth, whensoever they die, there is an end of them, they shall never come in being more : But with man it is otherwise, God hath endowed a man with an immortal soul, that shall never die ; a beginning indeed man has, but he shall never have an end : When death comes, his soul shall for some certain space of time, be separated from his body, and his body laid a while to rest in the dust of the earth : *But at last the trumpet will sound, and then all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*

The doctrine which I shall raise from hence, is this : That all mankind, both good and bad, shall at the sound of the last trumpet be raised again from the dust of the earth.

Now my method shall be this :

1. To prove, that there shall be a resurrection.
2. Of the persons that shall be raised ; that is, *All that are in the Graves.*
3. By what means the dead shall be raised that is, *By the sound of the trumpet, they shall hear the voice, and shall come forth.*
4. The different estate and condition of all men at the resurrection : *They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, but they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.*

5. And lastly, to convince us all, by way of application, of the drawing on of this time, and therefore that we must not marvel at it. *Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, &c.*

1. To prove there shall be a resurrection, which I shall do; first, from the scripture, which is the true and infallible word of God, to instance in some few places, as, *Isa. 26.* also *1 Cor. 15.* where you have a large description of the resurrection: Also, *Acts 14. 15.* *And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.* Likewise *Dan. 12. 1.* *Many that are asleep in the dust, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.* Also, *Hos. 3. 14.* God has there promised redemption from death, to ransom them from the power of the grave.

2. Now if we would believe the scripture, we must believe the resurrection of the body; for the word of God is true and faithful, and our Lord Jesus Christ hath said in his gospel, *That heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of his word shall fall to the ground,* *Mat. 5.* And besides all this, those scripture-promises which have been already fulfilled in all ages of the world, may assure us of the accomplishment of this one promise, *That our bodies shall be raised at the last day, from the dust of the earth.* And this is my father's will, saith Christ,

Christ, that of all that the father hath given me, should lose nothing, but should raise is up at the last day, John 6. 39.

3. That there shall be a resurrection of the body, may be proved not only from scripture, but also from nature itself: The resurrection is also proved from nature, as we may see from Isa. 26. 19. *The dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead. The dew is as the dew of herbs;* which intimates to us thus much, That as he herbs and plants seem to be dead and withered all the winter, yet in the spring they revive, and come forth, fresh and green; and as in the night, the sun is withdrawn, and the day seems to be buried in the silent night, yet in the morning the sun riseth as bright as ever, and enliveneth the world with his glorious beams: So it is here: tho' the bodies of men and women seem for a time to be lost, and turned to dust and corruption, yet in the glorious morning of the resurrection, they shall be raised to life, and revive to an immortal estate:

2. That there shall be a resurrection of the body, may be proved also by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered, died and was buried, that by his death he might redeem us from sin and hell; so he arose again, that by the virtue of his re-

resurrection he might redeem us again from death and the grave: The apostle makes the resurrection of Christ the foundation of our redemption, as you may see, *1 Cor. xv. 12.* *Now if Christ be preached that he arose from the dead, how say some of you, that there is no resurrection of the dead?* Now there were some that did not believe, that there was any resurrection of the dead, and this their incredulity and unbelief the apostle censures, and proves that there shall be a resurrection; and that from the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, intimating, that if Christ be raised from the dead, as he preached, that he is risen, then it needs must follow, that there must be a resurrection of all men from the grave. Now these people that hold strong that opinion, that there shall be no resurrection of the dead; yet these same men did preach that Christ was raised; but the apostle tells them plain, *That if it be so, that there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.* And if Christ be not risen, he tells them what a sad condition we are in; for *all our preaching, praying, and all we do and suffer for Christ is in vain,* 14. But in ver. 20, the apostle reconciles both arguments together; *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first Fruits of them that slept:* So that here the apostle assures 'em, that Christ is risen from the dead, and by the virtue and power of the resurrection, all mankind

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kind shall one Day be raised from the grave. And besides, we read in *Matt. 27.* that at the resurrection of Christ, *Graves opened, and many of the Bodies of the Saints which slept, arose out of their Graves* : which is an earnest to us, that by the same Virtue and power, all the Bodies of men and women, that are, and ever have been, and ever shall be to the World's end, shall be raised again at the last Day.

4. That there shall be a Resurrection of the Body, is an Article of our Faith ; therefore, we cannot deny the Resurrection, except we remove our belief, and deny our Christianity itself ; this was an Article of the Apostle's Faith, *Acts 24. 15. And have hope towards God, which themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the dead, both of the Just and of the unjust.*

But it may be some will object and say, *How can it be that all the Dead can be raised ; for many are drowned in the Sea, and their carcases are eaten with Fishes, and living Men have eaten those, and these Men, it is like, have afterwards been burnt to ashes, and their Ashes mingled among the Dust on the Earth, and scattered up and down, none does know where ?*

To this I answer, That to man, indeed, this is impossible to be ; but if God be infinite in his wisdom and power, as indeed he is ; then he makes the dust of every man, Woman and Child, and by his all-wise providence knows

what dust belongs to such and such a body where-ever it is scattered.

1. Friends, here will be a declaration of infinite power! For know this, he that by his power made all things out of nothing, can as easily by the same power raise our bodies again out of Something, even out of their own substance of matter.

Thus I have sufficiently proved, that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead.

2. The second Thing to be considered from the Text, is the number of the Dead which shall be raised; that is, all; for so saith our Lord and Saviour here in the Text: *The hour is coming wherein all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, &c.* All, that is, all the sons and daughters of *Adam*, that ever have lived since the world began, and all that ever shall live and die to the end thereof; all must rise and make their appearance at the last day: St. *John* declares in his vision, *Rev. 20. 12. That he saw the dead, both great and small stand before God.* By small and great, we are to understand, (not to understand in respect of stature, as if some shall appear grown men, and some children) we must all appear then in the stature and fulness of Christ; that is of a middle stature or of that stature *Adam* was created in, which is of a middle stature; the oldest shall appear no older, and the youngest no pouter, but by small and great we are to understand,

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First, Those that died of all ages, from the oldest, to the child that is still-born.

Secondly, By small and great, we are to understand all states and degrees of men and women, both high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble; all sorts and estates of men must then make their appearance, from the king on the throne to the beggar on the dunghil; and *Rev. 13. St. John* did see in his vision, *That the sea gave up her dead; and death and hell, that is, the earth and the grave, cast up their dead, and all were judged according to their works.* All the elements at the call of Christ must give up their dead, all that the fire hath consumed and burnt to ashes; all that ever had been buried in the sea; and all that ever hath been buried in the earth, as soon as the last trumpet sounds they must all come forth, none shall be so great as to escape, for none shall be so small as to be forgotten. Oh! what a great, what a vast assembly will there be, when all the sons and daughters of *Adam* shall meet together: To see an army of men together, we think it is a great sight. If all the men and women in *Great-Britain* were to meet together, at one place, what a great, what an invincible great assembly would there seem to be: But alas! what is *Great-Britain* to the whole world, it is counted but a garden-plat to other nations. And what is the whole world now living, in respect of all Ages that are past and to come?

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All the *Israelites* of old, which were counted as the sands of the sea, they were so innumerable; and besides them, so many millions of millions that have been slain in the wars, and so many thousands that have been swallow'd up in earthquakes and so many thousands and millions of millions that have died by the pestilence, and all other mortal distempers in all ages of the world: and all that have died naturally in infancy, in youth, middle-age, and old-age, and all that are now living, and that shall live to the world's end; when all these shall meet together at the general resurrection. O what a wonderful meeting will there be! *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 10.

Friends, both you that read this treatise, and I that write, we must all make our appearance there, all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth.

3dly, The third thing to be considered is this, by what means all the dead shall be raised; that is by the sound of the last trumpet; for so saith our Saviour in the text, *All that are in the graves shall hear his voice and come forth*; and what voice this is that the dead shall hear, you may see in 1 Cor. xv. 52, that is the sound of the last trumpet, *For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised*; and who that is, which shall sound this trumpet you may see in 1 Thes. 4. 15, 16. *For this I say unto you by the*

the word of the mouth of the Lord, that we which are alive shall not prevent them which are asleep, for the Lord himself shall descend from the Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God.

So that you see that this trumpet shall be sounded by an archangel: So *Matth. 24. 31.* They shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven, to the other.

Thus we see by what means the dead shall be raised: that is by the voice of the arch-angel, by the sound of the last trumpet, which voice shall be utter'd more loud and shrill than thunder, uttering these words, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.* Now in a few verses before the text, ver. 25, we have another voice that is sounding in our ears. *The hour is coming and now is, that the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live.* Now these two verses, that of the text and verse 25. tho' they seem to be alike in sound, yet they differ much; and that in these two respects:

1. First in respect of time: that voice spoken of, in ver. 25. is uttered in the present tense, *the hour is coming, and now is, &c.* But that voice spoken of in the text is spoken of altogether in the future tense, *the hour is coming*

ing, mark, there is no *now it is*, but *it is*, a time that is coming.

2. There is a great difference betwixt these two voices, and that in respect of the sense and meaning of the words; for them in the first voice, contains gracious and inviting words, which are interpreted by divines after this manner: *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.* That is, those that are dead in their sins, and rotting and stinking in the grave of their lust: Now these are under the call of the gospel, and they that hearken to this call, and obey his voice, and so come to Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith, and unfeigned repentance, they shall by Christ, obtain everlasting life. But whether they will hear this voice, or whether they will stop their ears against it; yet let them know there is another voice, which shall be uttered to the world, which is a voice of power; and that voice they must hear whether they will or no, *Arise, ye Dead, and come to judgment.*

Consider, Friends, tho' you now stop your ears and will not hear the sound of the trumpet of the gospel; yet know this, there is another trumpet, which will one day sound, calling all the dead out of their graves, saying, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment*; and whenever that last trumpet sounds, you must hear it whether you will or no; the depth of the grave shall not hinder the sound, nor yet the depth of the sea shall not hinder it. He

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He that could at first command all things out of nothing, by the word of his power, so at the last day he will but speak the word, and the dead shall all arise, and make their appearance before the tribunal seat of Christ.

The sound of this last trumpet shall be so loud, that it shall be heard all over the world, it shall pierce even to the bottom of the sea, and to the bowels of the earth: No sooner is this trumpet sounded, but the sound shall be obeyed: No sooner is the voice uttered, *Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment*, but immediately the graves in all the church-yards, and in all other places throughout the whole world shall be all opened, and the body of every man and woman shall be framed out of his own dust, and bone shall be joined to bone, and every part and member shall be joined in its place and order; and every soul shall return into its own body; the sea shall give up their dead; and the fire and earth shall give up their dead, and then immediately they shall be all gathered together, even to the valley of *Jehosaphat*, to be presented before the judgment-seat of Christ; as you may see, *Joel 3. 12*. For Christ says, *the hour is coming, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and come forth.*

Fourthly, The fourth thing considerable in the text, is the different estate and condition of all mankind, at the resurrection; that is, *Some shall arise to the resurrection of life, and some*

Some shall arise to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation. Now the different estate of good and bad, at the resurrection, may be considered in these respects:

1. They differ in respect of time: For tho' all mankind shall be raised from the dust of the earth, yet they shall not be raised all at one and the same time; there shall be two resurrections, first of the saints; and then of the wicked. Many there be which affirm, that there shall be a thousand years betwixt the resurrection of the saints, and of the wicked; that the saints shall all arise at the coming of Christ in the clouds, with all his glorious train of heavenly host, and shall reign with him a thousand years upon the earth; and that the rest of the dead arise not until that thousand years are accomplished, *Rev.* 20. 4, 5. Some say, This is meant the compleat number of a thousand years: And some say the meaning of the spirit of God there, is not the number of a thousand years, but only a considerable space of time: But I will not affirm any thing of that; yet this we are certain, that there shall be a difference between the resurrection of the good, and of the bad, in respect of time: For *St. Paul* is plain in this case, as we may see, *1 Thes.* iv. 16. he saith, *that the dead in Christ shall rise*: And if the dead in Christ rise first, then the resurrection of the wicked must needs follow after: And *Acts*

14. 15. *There shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust.* First, of the just, and then of the unjust; but how long a time there shall be between that, I will not positively affirm.

2. There shall be a difference between the resurrection of the good, and of the bad; and that in respect of their image and shape: *The bodies of the saints shall be raised in glory, like unto Christ's glorious body*, Phil. 3. 21. *saith the apostle, who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto the glorious body of Christ.* Thus Christ himself gives us a description of the brightness of the saints bodies at the resurrection, *Mat. 13. 93. then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*

The bodies of our first parents, in their state of innocency, was adorned with a glorious beauty and comeliness. Now this should have been the state and condition of the bodies of all their posterity, if they had not sinned; but sin hath stripp'd us of that glorious beauty and ornament, and without artificial cloathing, our bodies are very loathsome and vile; the bodies of the saints shall be *changed and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ.*

But, on the other side, the bodies of the wicked, shall at the resurrection appear more monstrous, vile and deformed than they were before in their state and nature: And besides, the bodies of the saints shall be delivered from that lumpishness and heaviness that they
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be now clogged with, and instead of natural Bodies, they shall be made spiritual Bodies 1. Cor. 15. 44. and shall fly too and fro as swift as Spirits; but as for the wicked, they shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness; *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Mat. 22. 13.

Fifthly and lastly, There shall also be a vast difference betwixt the resurrection of the good and of the bad, in respect of their final state and condition, that they shall be raised unto *They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* The good being first raised, and then the wicked, and then immediately after, the resurrection both of the just and of the unjust: Then they shall be divided one from another, *As a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats,* Mat. 25. *And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.* At first shall be pronounced the joyful sentence upon the righteous, *Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom:* But the wicked shall be sent away with that doleful sentence, *Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

Sixthly and lastly, The last thing considerable in the text, and that which I intend, shall be the application of the whole, is the drawing near of the time when the resurrection shall be; therefore our Saviour bids us not marvel

it, There were some in our Saviour's time, and also some in the apostle's time, and some there are in our days, that marvel when they hear of the resurrection of the body, and of the general judgment: They will not believe it; but, Oh! how strange soever they make of it, our blessed Saviour answers them of it, and tells them that it will certainly be: Therefore this doctrine may serve to convince us:

First, of the general resurrection, and day of judgment: For I have in this discourse proved it by several arguments, That there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust; and there is nothing more certain than death, so there is nothing more certain than a general resurrection after death.

Secondly, This may convince us, that as there shall be a resurrection, so the time when the resurrection shall be, is drawn near, so saith our Lord Christ here himself in the text, *Marvel not at this, the hour is coming, wherein all that are in the graves shall here his voice and come forth*; tho' our blessed Saviour tells us, *Mat. 24. That neither man nor angels know when the time shall be*, yet he assures us, *That the time is coming*, Acts 17. 31. we see there that God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world: And this appointed time is drawing nearer; do we not see how days and nights do wheel about apace? Yea, so fast is the time of the general resurrection coming on

on, so many times as the sun has wheel'd round the world since the creation, so many rounds is the thread wound off, and keeps winding off. It is now near 1740 years since our Lord Christ ascended up into heaven; the angels said unto the men of Nazareth, *This same Jesus shall so come again, as you have seen him go into heaven.* Acts 1. And the time ever since has been drawing nearer and nearer, and the time now certainly cannot be long; but that our Lord Jesus Christ will come in the clouds, and then the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall be raised, and both quick and dead shall make a general appearance.

First, Here is the use of reproof to such as take liberty to run on in sin, putting far from them the evil day: And because the Lord seemeth to delay his coming, therefore their hearts are set in them to do evil. There were some in the apostle's day, and I fear there are many such in these our days that walk after their own lust, and saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation, 2 Pet. 3. 34. But the apostle tells them Ver. 8. 9. That the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness) but is long-suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish: But the day of the Lord, when ever it comes, will come as a thief in the night, Ver. 10. And when men

all say, peace and safety, then suddenly cometh destruction upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. My friends, ye may have a care; for though you think as the Lord delayeth his coming, and thereupon you take liberty to yourselves to fulfil the desire of the flesh, yet take heed lest the Lord come in a day when you look not for him, and in a hour you are not aware of, and cut you under, and appoint your portion among the by-critics, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Mat. 24. 50, 51.

2. A use of exhortation: If it be so, that the Lord Jesus Christ will certainly come, and shortly come, and we must all be present before him, then how should we live here with all care and circumspection, that we may be found of him in peace, blameless and without spot: *How should we labour to be holy in all manner of conversation, and godliness; looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of the Lord?* 2 Pet. 3. 11. Let this be a strong motive to move a christian to duty and obedience, and perseverance therein. Let the word of St. James be as a spur to prick you up to be steadfast, and to hold out in the work of the Lord, Jam. 5. 8. *Be penitent, therefore, brethren; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.* And let me exhort you all in the words of our Saviour, Mark 13. 15. *Watch you therefore, for you know not when*

when the time is ; and what I say unto you, I say unto you all, watch. And in the Words of the Apostle, Heb. 10. 25. Exhorting one another so much the more, as you see the day approaching.

And farther to encourage us in well-doing, and to be the more diligent, to rebuke, to exhort, to persuade, and encourage one another in well-doing, let us consider, that we must all one day meet together, to be the acquitters, or else the condemners of one another ; tho' death come and takes away a wife from a husband, and a husband from a wife ; tho' it takes away parents from their children, and children from their parents ; tho' death comes and makes a breach among relations, neighbours and families, yet let us consider, that the day of the resurrection will come, and then we shall not only see and know one another, but we shall be able also to converse with one another ; but oh ! what a dreadful meeting we shall then have, if we shall be forced to be the condemners of one another at that day ; the apostle tells us, that the Saints shall judge world at the last day : Oh how dreadful will this be when godly parents shall be condemners of their own children, the fruit of their own bowels, those whom they once delighted in, and loved most dearly, now to pronounce Christ's sentence against them, because they were stubborn, wilful, and

would not harken to their godly counsels and admonitions ; I say, or godly parents to ex-
ult and applaud Christ's sentence against
them, when they are condemn'd to everlast-
ing fire ; Oh ! how dreadful will this be :
And thus for children to condemn their own
parents, because they let them alone in their
evil courses, and would not correct them nor
reprove them. And for husbands and wives
to be the condemnation of one another. Oh !
how sad will this be ? Nay, consider far-
ther, that relations, families, neighbours,
acquaintance, which spend their precious
time together in feasting, drinking, gam-
ing, and other kind of loose living, must
meet together, and be the condemnation of
one another at the last day. Oh ! what a
dreadful meeting will this be ! But, on the
other hand, consider, that all those parents
and children, husbands and wives, families
and relations, which would not join with
the wicked, but spent their time in praying
together, and for one another in exhorting,
instructing, reproofing, and encouraging one
another : Oh, what a joyful meeting these
shall have at the resurrection ! Now death
many times make a breach among families
and relations ; a wife she laments for the
loss of her husband, he laments for the loss
of his wife ; the children sometimes do grieve,
because they have lost a loving father, or a
dear

dear mother, and the parents they grieve, and are cast down, because they have lost a precious child. But, friends, weep not for your relations, as without hope, for they are not lost, for the morning of the resurrection will come, the trumpet will sound, and the dead shall arise, and then you shall meet them all again: And no tongue can utter or express the joy you shall have one with another to all eternity, if you spend your time together in this world, in the works of faith and obedience. And now, to conclude, let us all therefore so live, and so spend our short time here on earth, that so in the glorious morning of the resurrection, when the last trumpet shall sound, we may rise to the resurrection of life, and triumph and rejoice amongst glorious angels to all eternity: Which the Lord of his mercy grant. *Amen.*

The End of the Second SERMON.

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